DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 347 HE 035 307

AUTHOR	Van Kollenburg, Susan E., Ed.
TITLE	A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement. 2000 Edition.
INSTITUTION	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Chicago, IL. Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	422p.; Prepared for the program of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (105th, Chicago, IL, April 1-4, 2000). For the 2001 and 2002 collections, see HE 035 308-309.
AVAILABLE FROM	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602 ($23). Tel: 312-263-0456; Tel: 800-621-7440 (Toll Free); Fax: 312-263-0460; e-mail: pubs@ncacihe.org; Web site: http://www.ncaihe.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC18 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Accountability; Change Strategies; Community Colleges; Educational Assessment; *Higher Education; Information Technology; *Institutional Evaluation; Models; *Outcomes of Education; *Self Evaluation (Groups); *Strategic Planning; Student Evaluation

ABSTRACT

This collection presents 92 papers or summaries of papers presented at a 2000 conference on self-study and institutional improvement for institutions of higher education. Papers are grouped into these chapters, with some sample topics in parentheses: (1) "Regional and National Initiatives" (associate degrees; adult learning); (2) "Quality Improvement and Accreditation" (recruitment and retention; quality criteria); (3) "Quest for Quality: Mission and Planning" (mission statements; renewal processes); (4) "Assessment of Student Academic Achievement: Case Studies" (5) "Assessment of Student Academic Achievement: Tools of Assessment" (assessment techniques; performance assessment); (6) "Question for Quality in Student Learning: General Education" (interdisciplinary approaches; improvement processes); (7) "Quest for Quality: Teaching" (educational practices; reflective teaching); (8) "Quest for Quality: Institutional Integrity" (ethics; diversity); (9) "Quest for Quality: Distance Learning" (technology; partnerships); (10) "Question for Quality: Self-Study and Institutional Improvement" (self-evaluation); (11)"Coordinating the Self-Study Process" (study implementation; methodology); (12) "Practical Advice on Self-Study" (models; tools); and (13) "Seeking Initial Affiliation with the Commission" (candidacy; accreditation). Most papers contain references. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

NCA

ED 469 347

A COLLECTION OF PAPERS ON SELF-STUDY AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S.E. VanKollenberg

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2000 EDITION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE035307

NCA

A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement

2000

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION, THE COMMISSION AND A NEW CENTURY

Prepared for the program of the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
at the 105th Annual Meeting of the
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60602

(312) 263-0456 (800) 621-7440

fax: (312) 263-0460

web site: www.ncacihe.org

e-mail: pubs@ncacihe.org

2000

The papers included in this collection offer the viewpoints of their authors. The Commission highly recommends them for study and for the advice they contain, but none represent official Commission directions, rules, or policies.

Susan E. Van Kollenburg, Editor

© Entire contents copyright 2000 by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Additional copies of this document can be ordered from: North Central Association: 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, Ill 60602. $23.00.

Contents

FOREWORD ix

PREFACE x

1 **REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES**

The Centrality of the Associate Degree at Community Colleges
Paul A. Tambrino, Iowa Valley Community College District, and David A. Berry, Essex County College 3

Greater Expectations for Liberal Education in the Twenty-First Century: Aims, Design, and Quality
Andrea Leskes, Association of American Colleges and Universities 10

The Influences of Regional Accreditation Associations on Institutions' Approaches to, Support for, and Use of Student Assessment
Marvin W. Peterson and Catherine Augustine, University of Michigan 15

The Adult Learning Focused Institution
Thomas Flint and Ruth Frey, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning 22

Defining Good Practice in Adult Degree Programs
Patricia Brewer, Sinclair Community College, and Eugene Sullivan, American Council on Education 25

The Urban Universities Portfolio Project (UUPP): Linking Learning, Improvement, and Accountability
Susan Kahn and Sharon Hamilton, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis; Christian Messenger, University of Illinois at Chicago 29

2 **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND ACCREDITATION**

Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education
Jane Bishop and Dennis Ladwig, Lakeshore Technical College; Jerrilyn Brewer and Lee Rasch, Western Wisconsin Technical College 35

When Quality Meets Assessment: The Good, the Better, and the Ugly
Gloria Dohman, Harvey Link, and Gary Henrickson, North Dakota State College of Science 44

Incorporating the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Criteria into Your NCA Accreditation Process
Ronald A. Swanson and Helene Hedlund, Northwest Technical College; Jerry L. Neff, AES International 48

Articulation of the Baldrige Criteria to Meet the Self-Study Guidelines for NCA
Denis Roark, Eastern New Mexico University 52

3 **QUEST FOR QUALITY: MISSION AND PLANNING**

Mission Restatement via Heritage Rediscovery: A Case Study
James D. Evans, Lindenwood University 59

Institutional Mission and Statement Plan: Map and Territory
William A. Vensel and Andy Keogh, Ohio Dominican College 66

General Education Reform and the Continuous Pursuit of Quality Learning
John A. Halpin, Eureka College 71

A Core Values Process: Giving Life to the Mission
Gary J. Boelhower, Marian College of Fond du Lac 76

The Evolution of Strategic Planning at a Two-Year Technical College: Changing the Culture of a Centralized Bureaucracy
Vicki J. Martin and John R. Birkholz, Milwaukee Area Technical College 80

Process is Key to Plan's Power
Joseph Sertich and Anne Marie Erickson, Itasca Community College; Steve Frantz, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities 85

Moving the Cemetery: A Case Study in Curriculum and Institutional Renewal
J. Keith Keeling, Central Methodist College 89

Collaborative Strategic Planning and Institutional Change
Ronald M. Singer, John M. Ostheimer, Esther Letven, and Art Dudycha, University of Wisconsin-Parkside 94

Significant Planning/Significant Results
James P. Colman, Cedarville College 98

4 **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: CASE STUDIES**

Assessment Measures Leading to More Effective Assessment Programs
Debra K. Cartwright and Candace C. Young, Truman State College 103

A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Student Assessment
Ronald D. Reed and Rolf C. Enger, U.S. Air Force Academy 108

Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning: The Evolving Role of Assessment at a Research University
Mary E. Huba, Iowa State University 114

Teaching Reconnections: Assessment-Driven Institutional Renewal
Ronald Dowe and Mary Mahony, Wayne County Community College District 118

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Overcoming Obstacles to Assessment
Richard Baker, John Cosgrove, and Deneen Shepherd, St. Louis Community College 123

The At-Risk Student in the Freshman Year: An Assessment-Based Approach to Organizational Design
John R. Phillips, Springfield College, and Robert R. Kerr, Illinois Community College Board 126

Diversifying Assessment, Re-Examining Learners Assessed: An Important Look at Developmental Education
Kathleen Iudicello, Pearl Williams, and Lawrence Pesta, Maricopa County Community College–Estrella Mountain Community College 130

Assessing Non-Traditional Adult Degree Programs: The Framework, the Instruments, the Results
David Wright and Mark Smith, Indiana Wesleyan University 135

Maintaining Momentum in the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement
Linda Allen, Kirkwood Community College 141

Transforming the Campus Culture: From Faculty Resistance to Faculty Leading the Charge!
Cheryl Knox, St. John's University, and Rita Knuesel, College of St. Benedict 146

Struggles that Staff and Faculty Encountered in Their Implementation of Assessments of Learning and Satisfaction at a Doctoral Degree Granting Institution
Deb Suzzane, Rogers State University, and James Larson, University of North Dakota 149

Striving for Excellence: A Small College Experiments with Assessment to Improve Student Learning and Strengthen the Curriculum
Diana Brigham Beaudoin and Linda Marie Bos, Mount Mary College 152

5 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: TOOLS OF ASSESSMENT

New Directions in Assessment: Leveraging Technology in the Quest for Quality
Susan Rickey Hatfield, Winona State University, and Britt Yackey, Furkon, Inc. 159

Using Electronic Portfolios to Assess Technical and General Education Outcomes
Lisa Larson, Jerry J. Johnson, Beverly Claybrook, and Gayle Larson, Dakota County Technical College 164

Improving Program Quality through Student Outcomes Assessment in the Capstone Course
Edward J. Keeley, Amin Karim, and Patrick L. Mayers, DeVry Institute of Technology 167

Creating a Sophomore Capstone Experience in the Community College
Victoria Jensen and Alan Wenzel, Highland Community College 172

Assessing the "Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination"
Allen Jaisle and Bruce Francis, Capella University 175

Implementing Performance Assessment in the Major
Miriam Q. Williams and Cheri Shakiban, University of St. Thomas 180

Enhancing Faculty and Staff's Ability to Make Quantitative Decisions: Exploding the Usefulness of Assessment Data
Don Lind, Coffeyville Community College 183

Assessment and Program Review: Linking Two Processes
Dwight Smith and Douglas Eder Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville 186

Revitalizing Institutional Assessments with Alternative Program Evaluation Designs
William E. Roweton, Chadron State College 189

6 QUEST FOR QUALITY IN STUDENT LEARNING: GENERAL EDUCATION

Interdisciplinary General Education: Refining General Education Criteria
Cheryl Rose Jacobsen, Wartburg College, and Joan B. Fiscella, University of Illinois at Chicago 193

Assessing General Education Programs by Integrating Theory, Process, and Practice
Pamela Pinhas-Schultz, Carroll College 196

General Education Assessment: Keeping the Process Practical, Manageable, and Beneficial
Seth Mendelowitz, Parkland College 202

The Reality of Assessing General Education Competencies of Part-Time Community College Students
Carol Scarafiotti, Laura Helminski, and Larry Celaya, Maricopa County Community College–Rio Salado College 206

Assessment as a Method to Improve General Education
Karen B. Mann and Judith Dallinger, Western Illinois University 209

Assessing the Achievement of General Education Objectives: A College-Wide Approach
Trudy Bers, B. Diane Davis, and Mary L. Mittler, Oakton Community College 212

Using Statistics and a User-Friendly Workbook to Engage Faculty in the General Education Process across the Curriculum
Russell Watson, Janis Geesaman, and Peter Klassen, College of DuPage 217

7 QUEST FOR QUALITY: TEACHING

Keeping Competitive with Business and Industry Training While Applying Performance Outcomes and Measuring for Efficiency and Effectiveness
Mary Ann Bazile, Keith Myers, and Cindi Thiede, Moraine Park Technical College 223

Best Practices for Faculty Research/Scholarship Development in the Master's Comprehensive/Doctoral Environment
Peter J. Kasvinsky, Youngstown State University, and Katy E. Marre, University of Dayton 227

The Changing Roles of Faculty: The Role of Adjunct in Adult Degree Programs
Cheryl Stacy, Bluffton College 232

Toward More Self-Reflective Teaching: A Model for Integrating the Use of Classroom Assessment, Peer Observation and Review, Rubrics, and a Course Portfolio as Discipline-Based Faculty Development
Karla Brown, Hawkeye Community College. 238

Managing Adjunct Faculty: A Model for Classroom Success
Beth Newton and Bernie Yevin, Fontbonne College 242

Preparing High Quality Faculty for Learning Focused Institutions in the 21st Century
Howard G. Sam Bass, Nicolet Area Technical College, and Kenneth Collins, Northeastern State University 244

8 QUEST FOR QUALITY: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Developing an Institutional Statement of Ethics
Janice Elias and Denise Da Ros, Youngstown State University 251

Criterion Five as an Organizing Framework
Suzanne Selig and Lucinda Pfalzer, University of Michigan–Flint. 257

Achieving Diversity: A Process
Bonnie Oberman and Ida Roldan, Institute for Clinical Social Work 262

Ethics for Institutions, Faculty, and Students in a Technology Enhanced Environment
Carole Beere and Gwen Hillesheim, Walden University 266

9 QUEST FOR QUALITY: DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance Education Through Strategic Alliances
Scott Herriott, Maharishi University of Management 271

Online Higher Education Trains Knowledge Workers for the 21st Century
Robin Throne and Kersten Shepard, Hamilton College 276

The Quest for Quality: Implementing and Documenting a Distance Education Partnership
Linda L. Byington, Davenport College of Business, and Jennifer Byron, DES, Inc. 280

A Collaborative Problem-Based Model for Distance Education: A Master of Arts in Teaching Program that Supports Peer Collaboration Among Teachers
Hattie Gilmore and Larry Gregg, Saint Mary College; Karen Evans, SkyLight Professional Development 284

10 QUEST FOR QUALITY: SELF-STUDY AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Getting More Out of the Self-Study: Using Self-Study Outcomes to Aid in Strategic Planning
Timothy V. Franklin, Kevin J. G. Snider, Marilyn F. Schultz, and Richard H. Wells, Indiana State University 289

Plan Implementation by Continuous and Very Public Performance Evaluation
William Cheek and James Baker, Southwest Missouri State University 295

The Quest for Quality: Using the Self-Study Process to Connect Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness
Charles S. Weiner and Douglas N. McMillan, Southeastern Oklahoma State University 300

The Three E's–Evolution, Empowerment, and Excitement: Results of the Commission's Self-Study Process at Tulsa Community College
John T. Kontogianes and Cheryl Hughes, Tulsa Community College 304

11 COORDINATING THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Getting Started
Diane McNeilly and Norman Jenkins, Kishwaukee College 309

Team Building: Key to a Successful Self-Study and Team Visit
Ronald D. Reed and Rolf C. Enger, U.S. Air Force Academy 313

The Chicken Little Syndrome: Demystifying the Self-Study Process
Ann Frankland, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma 317

Strategies for Surviving the Self-Study Process
Trish Loomis, Loretta Ponzar, and Mindy Selsor, Jefferson College 321

Tricks, Treats, and Traps
Judith J. Shultz and Donna S. Statzell, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College 325

The End Really in Sight: Final Preparations for the Team Visit
Daniel P. Larson, St. Charles County Community College, and Mimi Elwell, Lake Michigan College 329

Are You Ready for the Next Step?
Rebecca J. Burgart and Michael L. Knedler, Iowa Western Community College 333

If We Knew Then What We Know Now
Nancy C. Kolakowsky and Carol A. Maddin, Northland Pioneer College 335

12 PRACTICAL ADVICE ON SELF-STUDY

Using the Institutional Plan for Self-Study to Accomplish a Purposeful, Meaningful, and Successful Self-Study Process
Patricia L. Ziegler, American Institute of Business 341

Transitioning from NCA's Traditional Model to the New AQIP Model: One Institution's Process
Laura D. Browne, Iowa Valley Community College District, and Cindy Green, Marshalltown Community College 349

Fostering Employee Ownership in the Self-Study Process through Committee Empowerment
Deb Jones and Nancy Schendel, Iowa Lakes Community College 353

Developing Data Resources for Facilitating Institutional Self-Study
Charles F. Harrington and Robert L. Reid, University of Southern Indiana; and Kevin J. G. Snider, Indiana State University 356

Worksheets: A Tool for Multiple Self-Study Tasks
James Clarke and Anne Marie Erickson, Itasca Community College 361

The Resource Room: Real, Virtual, and Imagined
Elaine M. Klein, University of Wisconsin–Madison 365

Organizing a Professional-Looking Resource Room
Ann Peterson and Gale Bigbee, South Central Technical College 368

Connecting the NCA Team to Distant Students Through Technology
Jo Ann Sterling, University of St. Francis 371

Countdown: "On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!"
Beth J. Bridgforth and Jan C. Haven, East Arkansas Community College 374

Conducting a Self-Study and Team Visit on a Dime: How Small Colleges Can Achieve a Quality Self-Study and Team Visit with Limited Human and Financial Resources
Kay Luft and Dorothy Phillips, St. Luke's College 377

But How Do We Reach Them All?
Elaine M. Klein and Joseph Wiesenfarth, University of Wisconsin–Madison 381

Facing (and Listening to) the Music: Effective Use of the Third Party Comment Process
Jean K. Mulhern, Wilberforce University 384

Practical Advice and Useful Survey Tools to Expedite the Collection of Data and Writing the Self-Study Report and to Set the Stage for Ongoing Improvement: A Private Liberal Arts College Shares Its Knowledge and Experience
Marguerite M. Bennett, Mount Vernon Nazarene College 388

Evaluation Versus Description: Conducting the Self-Study and Writing a Good Report
Stephen D. Rowe, Concord College, and Kay L. Clawson, West Liberty State College 392

Linear vs. Systemic Perspectives: The Processes and Outcomes of a Focused Visit One Year Later
Charles S. Weiner and Douglas N. McMillan, Southeastern Oklahoma State University 395

Using Faculty Liaisons and Poster Sessions to Increase Campus Involvement in Self-Study and Student Assessment Activities
Edward Angus, Fort Lewis College 399

13 SEEKING INITIAL AFFILIATION WITH THE COMMISSION

If We Had Known Then What We Know Now…A Retrospective on Candidacy by a Small Career College
Sarah M. Dennison and Tawnie L. Cortez, Rasmussen College 405

Initial Affiliation…Candidate Style
Vickie L. Donnell and R. Elaine Crabtree, Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences .. 411

From Candidacy to Accreditation
Vickie L. Donnell and R. Elaine Crabtree, Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences .. 416

Foreword

This *Collection of Papers* testifies to one thing: the Commission's Quest for Quality might be a singularly important journey for the Commission, but it is not a solitary journey. The Pew Charitable Trusts, following the wise advice of Russ Edgerton, is supporting a variety of these quests, and we benefit at this Annual Meeting by hearing from many of them. But the findings of several other national organizations and studies are represented in this *Collection* and at this meeting. From all of these stakeholders in quality higher education we learn important lessons.

Following the excellent tradition of earlier collected papers, this *Collection* testifies to the wide range of pathways being followed by our affiliated institutions in their various quests for quality. From implementing internal quality improvement programs to mission revision, strategic planning, and general education review and revision, these papers speak both of significant commitments of energy and of useful results and insights. The lessons to be learned from these experiences are invaluable.

That higher education is in transition undoubtedly explains to some extent the remarkable variety of issues we all confront in defining and assessing quality. To some distance education is simply another mode of delivering instruction; for others it represents a fundamental recasting of the teaching and learning environment. Technology in general appears to be reshaping that environment even on residential campuses. When familiar practices change, inevitably questions arise about evidence of quality in the new practices. At this meeting we have much to learn from those already engaged in identifying that evidence both in distance education and in methods of evaluating and supporting the faculty involved in these changes.

Many people attending the Annual Meeting come to learn about effective leadership of institutional self-study processes. The Workshop on Self-Study together with other presentations provide good models and excellent advice for all who have assumed the responsibility of preparing an institution for evaluation. Because we use the same time to train the corps of site visitors–Consultant-Evaluators–these papers about self-study also contribute to the learning of evaluators.

Under the able leadership of Susan Van Kollenburg, the Commission's staff have created an Annual Meeting meant to support learning, information sharing, and networking. This *Collection of Papers* in and of itself is a significant resource to fulfill those goals.

Steven D. Crow
Executive Director

March 1, 2000

Preface

On behalf of the Commission, I am pleased to present the 2000 edition of the *Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement.* Now in its sixteenth year, the *Collection of Papers* has moved beyond a supplement to the Meeting presentations to be a remarkable resource throughout the year for all who are interested in issues of higher education quality. We are grateful to our speakers for their generous contributions to the work of the Commission through these papers as well as through their presentations at the Annual Meeting.

The theme of the 2000 Annual Meeting, "Quest for Quality," is woven throughout the *Collection,* from the rich variety of efforts detailed in the first chapter on regional and national initiatives through chapters on quality improvement, mission and planning, general education, teaching, integrity, and distance learning. Over the eleven years of the Commission's Assessment Initiative, the *Collection of Papers* has highlighted institutional efforts to assess student academic achievement. In this year's edition, discussions of assessment efforts are not limited to the chapters on assessment, but appear in more than forty papers throughout the volume. For those involved in self-study, the *Collection of Papers* goes beyond the policies and procedures provided in the *Handbook of Accreditation,* to give practical advice based on actual experience. Several papers explore alternatives to traditional self-study.

Producing a book of this size in five weeks requires significant team effort. Special thanks are given to the following individuals who made the 2000 *Collection* possible: Marisol Gomez and Jeanne Darling, for their help in processing initial submissions and preparing files; Patsy Thrash and Marti Bjornson, for their valuable editorial assistance; Viki Berberich, for her extraordinary patience and persistence in creating the layout; Gerry Van Kollenburg, for his work on the charts and graphics; Sherri Duskey, for the beautiful cover design; and Aaron Marsh of Honi Graphics, for always getting the book printed in time for the Meeting.

The Commission invites your comments about the *Collection of Papers* and welcomes your suggestions for future topics for the Annual Meeting program. I hope that you will consider participation as a speaker at a future Meeting. The strength of the Annual Meeting lies in the willingness of our institutions to share their experiences with others. I look forward to seeing you in April.

Susan E. Van Kollenburg
Editor
Associate Director of Programs, Publications,
and Member Services

March 1, 2000

Chapter 1

Regional and National Initiatives

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

The Centrality of the Associate Degree at Community Colleges

Paul A. Tambrino
David A. Berry

General (Liberal Arts) education[1] is central to the mission of the community college. It should provide students with fundamental communication, critical thinking, mathematical, and problem solving skills that will serve them in their future education and careers. Improving general education is a major part of current education reform efforts.

The Challenge

Critics today argue that colleges are dropping the ball at a crucial moment, catering too much to student tastes, requiring too few mandatory "core" courses, and lowering grading standards. A 1993 survey by the National Center for Educational Statistics showed that half of 5,000 college graduates could not read or interpret a simple bus schedule. Forty-four percent could not determine the contrast in a newspaper article presenting two opposing views. Seven out of eight could not figure (even with the use of a calculator) the cost of carpeting a room. A 1996 Roper survey found that 84% of college seniors could not say who the United States president was at the start of the Korean War, and only 8% knew the source of the phrase, "government of the people, by the people and for the people." A 1996 National Association of Scholars study reported that the percent of mandatory courses has declined from 36% in 1914, to 24% in 1939, to 22% in 1964, and to a mere 7% in 1993. The percent of institutions with a natural science requirement decreased from 90% in 1964 to 34% in 1993. On June 4, 1996, *The Community College Times* reported that an analysis of college transcripts of recent bachelor's degree recipients showed that 26% of them had not earned undergraduate credit in history, and almost 31% had not studied mathematics of any kind.

Attacking the Problem

Does this mean that general education is on the defensive? Without general education, education is not education but vocational training. Our colleges and universities are turning out graduates who are well trained, but poorly educated. Practicing one's vocation successfully calls for skills in dealing with people, for being able to comprehend between cause and effect, and for the ability to carry out the burden placed on individuals in a free society. General education helps prepare the human mind for such things.

Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago during the 1940s, believed that liberal arts or general education prepared students for life. He believed students who could read, write, and think were prepared for any job related skill training.

Liberal arts have historically been advocated for the purpose of building character and pursuing truth for its own sake. Yet there has always been a link between general and career education. The Sophists of ancient Greece taught rhetorical and analytical skills to train debaters. In America, our earliest liberal arts colleges were primarily founded to train missionaries and ministers.

General education courses enable human beings to come into full possession of their higher capabilities. They provide a form of equity in which all can share and which are dependent, not on inherited wealth, but on desire, perception, and hard work. General education courses provide a form of currency convertible into wisdom and civic responsibility. Such courses can provide a form of communication that deepens language, a way of speaking truth (a truth that maybe derived by reason or revelation), a way of manifesting human uniqueness, and a way of teaching us how this planet possesses the numberless conditions that make human life possible. These courses enable us to live life to the fullest, to light our imaginations, to see into our visions, and to build upon our history. Such courses analyze, interpret, and refine our experiences in life, its comedies and tragedies, its struggles and achievements. They embrace history and the fine arts, literature and film, philosophy and ethics, jurisprudence and political theory, languages and linguistics, anthropology and theology, and some of the inquiries of the social sciences. They ask who we are and what our lives ought to mean. General education helps us to realize that freedom is protected and presumed, not only by power, but by wisdom and the full exercise of moral imagination. Only courses in general education provide a way of imparting meaning to life and life to meaning.

The Outcome

In August 1998, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) adopted a new policy statement on "The Associate Degree." (See Appendix B.) The statement was prepared by its Commission on Academic and Student Services in response to wide-spread concern about the emergence of vocational curricula, each with specific proficiencies, that led to concepts of the major dominated by vocational rather than by liberal learning or general education, and to synthesize the two then existing AACC policy statements: Associate Degree and Associate in Applied Science Degree. The Commission sought to rewrite these policy statements to provide balance between vocational and general education as reflected in curriculum and in institutional policies. The Commission sought further to address the philosophical issues that shaped the Associate Degree and to base the new AACC Policy Statement on current research regarding state mandates for degree requirements.

In 1995, the Commission undertook a survey of the 50 states to assess the current standing and range of divergence of state policies reflecting degree requirements for two-year colleges. The Commission discovered that most of the 25 states that responded required that at least 75% of the credits for the A.A. degree, 50% of the credits for the A.S. degree, and between 25 to 33% of the credits for the A.A.S. degree be in general education or liberal arts. (See Appendix C.)

The 1998 AACC Policy Statement on "The Associate Degree" contains a number of notable characteristics. First, the Statement stresses the importance of the A.A., A.S., and A.A.S. degrees for community colleges. Indeed, the preamble asserts, "The associate degree is affirmed as central to the mission of the community college" and that the degree is the "means through which the institution develops and maintains integrity in its educational programs," and "sets academic standards and goals for achievement for students, and establishes the relationship between the institution and others at community college and baccalaureate college levels."

Second, the statement emphasizes the importance of achieving a balance between general education and major or vocational requirements. This point is made philosophically in terms of meeting the needs of students for high educational achievement at the community college, for transfer to senior institutions, as well as for preparation for the workforce and for careers. The point is also made in terms of the structure and organization of the curriculum. The curriculum "should consist of a coherent sequenced set of courses" that includes a "strong foundation general education curriculum." The general education curriculum is defined as including courses in the arts; the humanities (literature, history, philosophy, foreign languages); mathematics; the natural sciences; and the social sciences. In addition, the number of general education credits for each of the associate degrees is recommended. For the A.A. degree, intended for students who transfer to a senior institution, three-quarters of the number of credits required; for the A.S. degree, intended for those majoring in agriculture, engineering and technology, and the sciences with substantial requirements in mathematics and natural sciences, one-half of the credits required; for the A.A.S. degree, leading directly to employment in a specific career, one-third of the credits required.

Third, the statement encourages policy makers to avoid the tendency to add degree titles and thereby minimize degree title proliferation. Further, it is noted that the correct title for the degrees is "associate *in*" (not "*of*") to encourage a nationally standardized nomenclature.

Finally, the statement emphasizes the importance of institutional responsibility to students, to other educational institutions, to the business community, and to the various publics served. For this reason, a section is devoted to guidelines for evaluation of programs so that institutional accountability is maintained and clearly articulated.

Summary

It is fair to say that it will be difficult to fashion general (liberal arts) education within the constraints of a two-year A.A.S. degree program. The minimum requirements are higher than those reported by several states and advocacy for the AACC standards might cause problems for local presidents. More precise definitions of the terms general education and liberal arts might help reduce these problems. The main goal is to give students a coherent and substantive introduction to the broad areas of human knowledge and their theories and methods of inquiry to ensure adequate breadth for all degree-seeking students by showing a balanced regard to what are traditionally referred to as the liberal arts or general education. Possibly, the initial step in moving toward the AACC recommendation for the A.A.S. degree may be to meet the goals of general or liberal arts education through course work outside of such requirements. This assumes, of course, that graduates who successfully complete these programs demonstrate competencies in written and oral communication, the ability for scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis and logical thinking. They should also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena; a knowledge and appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind; and the capability for continuing learning.

Notes

[1] The terms general and liberal arts education continue to be used interchangeably. In a 1995 AACC survey (see Appendix A) most of the 25 states that responded reported that they used the terms interchangeably. Among those states that reported specific definitions, there was no common definition for either term.

Paul A. Tambrino is President and Chief Executive Officer of Iowa Valley Community College District in Marshalltown.

David A. Berry is Executive Director of the Community College Humanities Association and Professor of History at Essex County College, in Newark, New Jersey.

The Centrality of the Associate Degree at Community Colleges

Appendix A

AL	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
AR	Liberal Arts not used, use only General Education
AZ	Moving toward using them interchangeably; present distinction not given
CA	Not defined in statute; in practice no standardized use
CO	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
CT	Liberal Arts = Program of Study; General Education = requirements of a program
FL	Liberal arts not part of community college jargon - use only General Education
GA	Liberal Arts = transferable courses; General Education = applied and competency based courses
IA	Liberal Arts = Program of Study; General Education = curriculum
IL	Use General Education only; Liberal Arts refers to the entire A.A. degree
KS	Liberal Arts = programs not traditionally vocational; General Education = courses in a specific vocational or baccalaureate track.
KY	Liberal Arts and General Arts used interchangeably
MD	General Education = core courses acceptable at all public institutions
MN	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
NC	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
ND	Liberal Arts = more restrictive curriculum (English, history, social science) - a foundation for General Education; General Education = broader than Liberal Arts, it's the learning and thinking processes and abilities acquired
NH	General Education = sciences, social sciences, humanities and other courses that prepare for life experiences
NM	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
NV	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
NY	General Education is a specific core curriculum
OK	General Education is the learning of facts, values, understandings, skills, attitudes and appreciation while liberal arts is the vehicle for implementing general education (taken directly from state policy.)
SC	Liberal Arts = courses in A.A. & A.S. degrees only; General Education = credits in Liberal Arts for all degrees
TX	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
UT	Liberal Arts and General Education used interchangeably
VA	Liberal Arts = degrees offered A.A. or A.A.S.; General Education = student outcomes and degree distribution requirements
WY	Liberal Arts and General Arts used interchangeably

The Centrality of the Associate Degree at Community Colleges

Appendix B

The Associate Degree

☐ The Associate Degree

Community colleges are comprehensive institutions, providing a full array of educational programs. The associate degree program is affirmed as central to the mission of the community college. The associate degree reflects the aims of educational attainment the institution holds for its students. It is a means through which the institution develops and maintains integrity in its educational programs. Appropriately defined, the associate degree becomes an integrating force for the institution, sets academic standards and goals for achievement for students, and establishes the relationship between the institution and others at community college and baccalaureate college levels.

The associate degree program establishes the community college vision of what it means to be an educated person for faculty, administrators, students, and society, and affirms the college's commitment to program coherence, continuity and student completion. Awarding the associate degree is a way by which an institution indicates that the student has completed a program of academic development and has achieved a level of performance reflected in student learning outcomes sufficient to move on to upper division collegiate work or to enter directly into specific occupations in the workplace. The associate degree maintains a tradition of excellence and ensures that students receiving the degree have attained learning outcomes reflecting an institution's academic programs and perspective.

The associate degree is recognized by baccalaureate degree-granting institutions and by employers as a critical indicator that a student has demonstrated proficiencies at levels deemed appropriate to enter upper-division college programs or to enter a field of work. The institution offering an associate degree assumes a responsibility to students and the public to establish and maintain excellence in all educational programs. Community colleges demand substantial commitments of resources, which, in turn, provide great dividends to students, the community, our nation, and the world. Because of the investment required to build and maintain academic quality, institutions have a professional obligation to develop programs with resources which are sufficient to ensure quality, including the appropriate use and application of new technologies. In addition, institutions, in partnership with the communities served, must provide straightforward information to appropriate decision-makers about the resources required to maintain quality programs. Further, institutions are strongly urged to provide communities with quantitative and qualitative reports of their achievements.

☐ Organization of the Curriculum

The curriculum is the foundation of associate degree programs. College administrators, faculty and staff who frame associate degree requirements must consider continuity in learning and the proficiency outcomes required for students to transfer to senior institutions and/or achieve career goals. Community college leaders are encouraged to maintain a continuing dialogue with high school administrators and faculty, college and university decision-makers, community leaders, business leaders, and other stakeholders with regard to program scope and sequence. Community colleges should serve diverse populations and provide appropriate educational and programmatic opportunities for students. The associate degree curriculums must be consistent with institutional outcomes that are identified through an institution-wide process acknowledging the importance of all sectors of the college community. Students should experience little or no loss of continuity, or loss of credits, when moving from one educational level to another.

The resulting associate degree program should consist of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, including an evaluation procedure that assesses the outcomes of the learning process. All degree programs must include the opportunity for the student to demonstrate proficiency in the use of communication and computation skills for transfer and/or for career goals. In addition, all associate degree programs should include a full complement of general education requirements that define what constitutes an educated person. A strong foundation general education curriculum (that is, courses in the arts; the humanities which include literature, history, philosophy, foreign languages; mathematics; the natural sciences, and the social sciences) includes courses that enable the student 1) to understand and appreciate culture, one's own and others, society, and nature; 2) to develop personal values based on accepted ethics that lead to civic and social responsibility; and 3) to attain necessary competencies in analysis, communication, designate institution-wide oversight bodies to assess the continuing balance and quality of associate degree programs.

☐ Looking Ahead

This policy statement is limited to the associate degree, thus leaving unexamined a host of other important components of the community college mission. Community colleges are attended by many individuals for valid reasons other than obtaining a degree. Non-degree seeking students require an array of certificate and enrichment programs, as well as continuing education and non-credit courses that are also affirmed as important to the mission of community colleges. Nothing in this policy statement should be interpreted as discouraging colleges from admitting students who do not have degree objectives to all courses for which they are qualified and from which they will benefit. Looking ahead, community colleges will continue to serve the full range of educational and academic needs of students and communities.

Approved: August 1998

The Centrality of the Associate Degree at Community Colleges

Appendix C

Associate Degree Requirements by State as Reported to AACC in December 1995

The fraction given under each degree is to be interpreted as follows:

- Numerator = semester hours *(s.h.) required in liberal arts or general education
- Denominator = total semester hours *(s.h.) for degree
- A number in parenthesis represents the required semester hours *(s.h.) of technology

*or quarter hours if designated

Example: The A.S. degree in Arkansas (AR) requires a total of 60-72 semester hours, of which 35 must be in liberal arts/general education and 25-37 must be in technology.

State	**AA**	**AS**	**AAS**
AL [a]	96/96	96/96	31-35/114 (83-79)
AR [b]	60-64/60-64	35/60-72 (25-37)	15-21/60-72 (45-51)
AZ [c]	40/60	18/60	18/60
CA	18+/60	18+/60	N/A
CO [d]	68/68	68/68	15/75 (60)
CT	20-24/60-68	20-24/60-78.5	20/67.5 (47.5)
FL	60/60	-/60 to 90	None
GA (Tech Schools Only Qtr Hrs)	-	-	25-30/90-114 (65-114)
IA	60-64/60-64	[e] 25-35/60-68 (26-33)	15-18/60-76 (45-60)
IL [f]	38/60	39/60	15/60 (45)
KS	60/60	60/60	15/60 (30-45)
KY	60/60	60/60	61-72/24-37 (24-48)
MD (No semester hours given)	Yes	Yes	Yes
MN (Qtr. Hours)	60-96/60-96	45/60-96 (45)	30/60-96 (45)
NC	64/64	64/64	15/64 [g]
ND	60/60	60/60	<60/60 (some but <60)
NH (Technology Only)	None	30/64-68 (32+)	30/64-68 (32+)
NM	30/60 (≤ 30)	30/60 (≤ 30)	30/60 (≤ 30)
NV [h]	33/60	33/60	24/60 (36)
NY [i]	45/60	30/60	20/60
OK	37/60	37/60	17/60 (43)
SC	60-66/60-66	60-66/60-66	15/60-84 (45-69)
TX	60-72/60-72	60-72/60-72	15/60-72 (45-57)
UT	90/90	45/90 (45)	23/90 (67)
VA [j]	60-63/60-63	60-63/60-63	18-21/65-69 (47)
WY	59-61/62-68 (3-9)	27-30/62-68 (30-38)	29-56/64-117 (35-61)

a) Tech colleges - A. Appl. Tech. 28/114 (86).
b) A.G.S. 15/60-64 (0-45)
c) A.G.S. 18/60
d) A.G.S. 68/68
e) In Iowa, the A.S. is a career option degree.
f) A.F.A. 27/60
A.Eng. Sci-27/60
g) A.G.S. 21/60
h) A.O.S. 0/60
i) A.A.A. 18-21/65/69 (47)
A.A.S. 60-63/60-63

The above footnotes indicate additional degrees and semester hour requirements within a given state.

Greater Expectations for Liberal Education in the Twenty-First Century: Aims, Design, and Quality

Andrea Leskes

The Problem

Around the world, American higher education has won a place of great respect, seen by many as one of the pinnacles of U.S. achievement. Its guiding philosophy differs significantly from that of most other educational systems, with the major differences being in the flexibility of study permitted through the first half of college-level work, the centrality of liberal learning that develops capacities of an educated person, and the near universality of attendance. This flexibility, focus on core learning, and democratization of higher education can all be seen as strengths of the American system.

Regarding the expansion of higher education's availability, the facts are startling: nearly 80% of high school students say they would like to go on to higher education,[1] with 75% (of the class of 1992) actually enrolling within two years of graduation.[2] In addition, as older Americans return to college they are forming an increasing percentage of matriculants, up to 42.5% from 22% two decades ago.[3] Higher education is now widely regarded by the public as the entryway to a successful career, since the job market has shifted to the service sector with its reliance on technology and more sophisticated intellectual skills.

These demographic and societal changes pose questions and challenges that foreground a darker side of the success story. In American higher education we struggle with a long series of disconnects that hamper purposeful learning. Disconnects like those between/among the following elements:

- learning at the various educational levels, from primary school, to high school, through college
- school reform efforts and the academy
- "general education" and concentrated study in a major
- Western- (or even American-) focused content and the globalized world
- the traditional content of our courses and the increasingly diverse nature of our student body
- curricular design and individual student goals
- the various disciplinary-based departments
- what research has taught us about learning and how we actually teach
- the new emphasis on student learning and existing faculty reward structures
- innovative curricular initiatives and an institutional culture that inhibits sustained reform

- an "ivory tower" mentality in much of college learning and the changing realities of the workplace
- graduate training for a scholarly life and the teaching career of a professor
- the "ideal" of a college student and the reality in which students balance study and families or study and jobs
- core educational purposes and the various interpretations of the term "liberal arts"
- student understanding of the aims of a baccalaureate education and the aims as understood by the colleges themselves.

A further look at three of these disconnects will exemplify the problems.

- **The divide between school reform efforts and the academy.** Across the country, driven by enlightened local effort or in response to state mandates, schools and school systems have begun experimenting with more effective educational approaches. The best of these movements hold strong promise for improvement but, unfortunately, higher education has been largely absent from these discussions. Conversely, innovative reforms in the academy rarely have involved perspectives from the high schools responsible for leading students to college-level work. Yet for the students themselves who attend college, K-12 and collegiate study are linked. And for the system, too, they are not distinct experiences: colleges assume that (at its best) high school education prepares students for the intellectual challenges of college-level work; education at these self-same colleges forms the basis for the professional training of future schoolteachers. However, elements like the educational hierarchy, compartmentalization of "teacher training," and demographics of the teaching profession have created this deep divide that impedes a coherent approach to student learning.

- **The divide between innovative curricular initiatives and an institutional culture that inhibits sustained reform.** Whereas many colleges and universities have undertaken educational reform projects or curricular revisions to improve student learning, far too often these admirable curricular initiatives wither over time due to loss of leadership, insufficient faculty support, financial starvation, or marginalization of the project. The innovations often remain pilot programs or marginalized, struggling for resources, while continued existence depends upon the personal commitment of a single individual. It is the rare campus that transforms its educational approach in response to an innovation and effects the necessary cultural shifts. If we believe in the importance of campuses planning early on for the sustainability of curricular innovation, we will need to help them bring the innovations into the heart of the institution's programs and into the center of its fiscal and infrastructural planning.

- **Disconnects between core educational purposes and the various interpretations of the term "liberal arts."** The academy has always insisted that the liberal arts are integrally tied to an education of lasting value and, indeed, they remain vibrant at our most respected and sought-after institutions. Yet the term "liberal arts" carries various meanings: it can refer to a type of institution, a particular college within a larger university, an educational philosophy, specific disciplines, or even general education. The great majority of those who now seek the benefits of higher education see their studies as career training or a gateway to the next job, rather than as demanding intellectual work. For most such students, the liberal arts (using any of the above definitions) are *perceived* to be largely irrelevant. We face a troubling situation in which those who have the most to gain from the horizon-expanding effects of the liberal arts least understand their benefits. As the concept of the "liberal arts" has lost social standing, however, the demand grows ever more insistent, from business and civic leaders alike, for forms of learning recognizably "liberal" (e.g., the ability to think analytically and creatively, work effectively in teams, integrate knowledge from a multitude of domains to solve complex problems, and participate fully in civic life and the greater world society).

  Given these significant disconnects in a system that must, *a priori*, form an interrelated whole, we are faced with asking ourselves whether our educational system, in design and operation, needs reshaping. After all, it was invented when the U.S. was largely agrarian, rural, and isolated from the rest of the world. It originally served an elite group: four percent of high school graduates attended college at the turn of the century, rising to 18% in 1941 and 40% in 1964.[4] We must lament the current situation in which the needs of all students now attending college are not being met: 50% of entering college freshmen drop out by the end of their sophomore year;[5] nearly one quarter of students entering four-year public colleges take remedial courses.[6]

With the actual dawning of a new century—nay, a new millennium—the concept of "education for the future" moves beyond simple hyperbole. We can ask ourselves (and not simply rhetorically) what forms of learning society will need and will expect higher education to convey.

Toward Solutions

In beginning to answer these self-evaluative queries, we must recognize that higher education has already committed itself, *de facto*, to near universal postsecondary education. College will become in this century what high school became in the last. At the present, only a small proportion of four-year institutions practice selective admissions; public two-year colleges, which alone enroll 45% of all first-time undergraduates,[7] must accept any high school graduate who applies.

Bridging the disconnected elements will involve both conceptual rethinking of the aims and purposes of baccalaureate study and action to implement processes supportive of high achievement. Solutions will evolve both sector-wide and locally. Of course, as we begin to probe solutions, we must readily admit that the educational community has not ignored its constituents' calls for educational change or its students' need for better understanding of what matters in college. There is an active (though fragmented) reform movement underway, largely centered in general education, but also emerging in selected fields. Around the country, colleges and universities are clarifying their goals for student learning and experimenting with new pedagogies (often technology-supported) to advance them. There has been widespread investment in first year programs, usually designed to help students develop better facility with college-level critical thinking. Accreditation associations, both regional and specialized, have placed new emphasis on educational effectiveness and accountability for student outcomes. There are also some nascent moves to align better the first two years of college with the anticipated outcomes of the school reform and standards movements. But better communication among leaders of these multiple efforts will be necessary if we are to progress in creating a shared vision for college-level learning and coordinated action to ensure high achievement for all students. We will also need a concerted push to resolve the long list of fragmentations if we are to achieve sustainable educational reform. Education for the next century will need to address, front and center, how to make student learning more connected—in many directions—to increase its effectiveness. A brief exposition on two of the disconnects listed above can illustrate how we might move toward better education.

- **The disconnects among learning at the various educational levels.** Although nearly three-quarters of high school graduates now continue with some advanced study, much secondary school work fails to develop the requisite intellectual skills. Yet research has shown that learning deepens through repetition and reinforcement, especially when the learners are asked to apply knowledge in new environments and to unscripted problems. Education intentionally constructed to move students in a coordinated way through K-9, then through high school into college, could better nourish the core intellectual capacities. Clear learning goals, that serve as the basis for curricular design, joined to working conversations among the educational practitioners at various levels (conversations to include pedagogical methods and assessment practices), would produce a true seamless plan of learning. Students pursuing such a plan should be more appropriately prepared for college and for life-long learning.

- **The disconnect between general education and the major.** Traditionally college study has been divided into the first two years of "general education" and the last two years of concentration in a major field. Increasingly, general education has been equated with the liberal arts, implying that no general education is learned through pre-professional study. Although three basic models of general education exist (a true core of required courses, a set of distribution requirements, and integrated learning communities), all of them separate gen-ed from advanced work. Institutional structures mostly reinforce this distinction, with academic departments—the loci of the majors—assuming no responsibility for general education. However, disciplinary study relies on the capacities general education hopes to foster in students; and conversely, these skills cannot be truly developed through a single exposure and narrow or non-existent applications. In other words, the intellectual capacities seen as the goals of "general education" are also the goals of the majors. If we could design college-level education in which 1) general education and the major were interrelated; 2) general education would underpin the major with the major building, in a sequential manner, on the intellectual skills introduced in a general education program; and 3) faculty would construct curricula that facilitate making the connections they presently leave students on their own (mostly unsuccessfully) to make, we could significantly enhance the effectiveness of learning.

The New AAC&U Initiative: "Greater Expectations"

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), through a new family of projects collectively entitled "Greater Expectations," has assumed the responsibility of raising these issues for discussion among the various constituencies of higher education across the country. In particular, the focus of these conversations will be on the nature of a liberal education for the future (as the basis for collegiate-level study even in pre-professional fields), and on ways to improve the quality of undergraduate education for all students.

These discussions, integrative in nature, lead to conceptual (or philosophical) and action goals as follows:

- **Conceptual and philosophical:**
  - to articulate the aims of higher education in contemporary society and the outcomes that would lead to greater achievement;
  - to shift the definition of "quality" in higher education from a focus on input credentials to a focus on student intellectual achievement.
- **Action:**
  - to foster the necessary linkages so students enter college better prepared for high-level intellectual work;
  - to showcase best practices and educational models that embody uniformly high expectations, while fostering improved student achievement across successively higher levels of learning (from high school through college);
  - to identify and disseminate institutional models that align systems and incentives with learning expectations leading to the sustainability of innovation;
  - to prepare resource material designed to assure that, at moments of institutional self-reflection (internally or externally determined), issues of educational quality and greater expectations figure centrally.

The Greater Expectations initiative has received start-up funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts in the form of a challenge grant. Activities, with a launch date set for early 2000, will include:

- empowering of a national panel—comprised of individuals from the academy, K-12, government, the private sector, and community groups—to lead an articulation of educational aims;
- selection of leadership institutions already engaged in liberal arts-centered educational reform to unite as a consortium that would mentor other colleges and universities, serve as resources for AAC&U, and help anchor the national panel's deliberations in authentic campus-based practice;
- creation of working groups to identify powerful curricular practices that foster the cumulative and coherent learning capable of preparing students for the exigencies of the modern world;
- sponsorship of professional development opportunities to encourage supportive institutional systems and incentives;
- broad dissemination on-line and in print of the knowledge gained and the models discovered, as resources to guide action for educational improvement.

Implications for Accreditation

The self-study process provides an important moment of self-reflection for a college or university. The moment carries the added imperative of external review, often a useful pressure for organizational change. Emphasis on institutional mission in the accreditation process assumes that mission will inform curricular design; this expectation has been at the heart of accreditation standards across the country. However, the link between mission and curriculum—educational goals—has often been weak. Rigorous substantiation of institutional effectiveness would acquire real meaning if mission led to educational goals which, in turn, conditioned curricular design and delivery. Given these conditions, the call for documenting institutional effectiveness as part of the accreditation and peer evaluation process holds important potential to place—front and center on the agenda of every college and university—the issues raised above.

In addition, the peer accreditation process, through the collaborative setting of standards of excellence, offers a forum for discussing educational expectations. AAC&U, therefore, plans to involve accreditation associations in its project with the desired result of incorporating the concepts of intentionality, greater expectations, and higher achievement into accreditation standards and institutional self-studies. The work will align with the review and revision of accreditation standards occurring across the nation.

Notes

[1] Peter Hart Research Associates, Inc. *Shell Education Survey Study #5487.* 8-29 June 1999.

[2] U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. 1997. *Access to Postsecondary Education for the 1992 High School Graduates.*

[3] U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). *Fall Enrollment Survey, 1995.*

[4] Gaff, Jerry G. and James L. Ratcliff. *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum.* Jossey-Bass:San Francisco, 1999, 73-76.

[5] Riley, Richard W. Speech to the National Press Club, Washington, DC. 15 September 1999. Available at http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/09-1999/990915.html.

[6] U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. 1996. Postsecondary Education Quick Information System. *Remedial Education at Higher Education Institutions in Fall 1995.*

[7] U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *1990 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS: 90/94).*

Andrea Leskes is Vice President for Education and Quality Initiatives at the Association of American Colleges and Universities in Washington, D.C.

The Influences of Regional Accreditation Associations on Institutions' Approaches to, Support for, and Use of Student Assessment

Marvin W. Peterson
Catherine Augustine

Introduction

Regional accrediting associations have played an important role in driving the postsecondary student assessment movement (Aper, Cuver, & Hinkle 1990; Banta, 1993; Muffo, 1992; Cole, Nettles, & Sharp, 1997; Nichols, 1990; Steele & Lutz, 1995). Institutional responses to accreditation requirements for assessment have varied, ranging from "meeting minimal standards," to a comprehensive "institutional self-evaluation" (Peterson, Einarson, Trice, & Nichols, 1997). Assessment researchers clearly contend that the assessment of student performance should not be undertaken as an end in itself, but as a means to educational and institutional improvement (AAHE, 1992; Banta & Associates, 1993; Ewell, 1988, 1997). Using results of assessment for institutional improvement is also an important goal of North Central Association (NCA) member institutions.

In this paper we will provide results of a national survey on 1) how regional accrediting associations influence institutions in their approach to assessing students; 2) how assessment practices of NCA institutions vary from assessment practices of other institutions; and 3) what external influences and internal practices are most effective at stimulating positive internal uses of student assessment information.

Study Background and Methods

This paper is based on the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement's research on student assessment in postsecondary institutions. Based on an extensive literature review (Peterson et al., 1997), we developed a survey titled "Institutional Support for Student Assessment." In 1998, the survey was sent to chief academic officers at 2,524 nonproprietary two-year and four-year institutions in the U.S. Completed surveys were received from 1,393 institutions for an overall response rate of 55%. For more detailed information on this project and the variables under study, please consult Peterson, Einarson, Augustine, and Vaughan (1999a). Information on student assessment is also available by institutional type (associate of arts, baccalaureate, comprehensive, and doctoral/research) in four extensive research documents (Peterson, Augustine, Einarson & Vaughan, 1999a & 1999b; Peterson, Einarson, Augustine, & Vaughan 1999b &1999c).

For the purposes of this paper, we will be presenting frequency data on how regional accreditation associations influence institutions' student assessment activities; t-test results comparing how institutions in the NCA region compare to institutions in the other five accrediting regions; and regression results that both describe the relative influence of accrediting regions on institutions' approaches to student assessment and illuminate the significant predictors of student assessment uses.

Results and Discussion

☐ The Influence of Accrediting Agencies

Of the 1,393 institutional representatives who responded to our survey, 80% had completed a regional accreditation review that required a component on student assessment. Even more institutional representatives–a full 95%–reported that they are familiar with their accrediting region's student assessment requirements. Therefore, for the most part, even those who have not yet gone through a self-study process requiring student assessment are aware of their association's student assessment guidelines. Table 1 presents how survey respondents perceive that regional accreditation requirements have affected their student assessment practices. For comparison purposes, table 1 also presents responses to survey questions on the influence of state requirements for student assessment. Slightly more than half (54%) of the survey respondents indicated that their state has a student assessment mandate for postsecondary institutions.

Table 1.
Influences of Regional Accreditation Associations and State Assessment Mandates on Institutions' Student Assessment Practices

	N=1,359 Regional accreditation requirements for student assessment:	N=625 State Assessment mandates:
1. Were an important reason for institution initiating student assessment	64%	45%
2. Have increased institution's involvement in student assessment	79%	62%
3. Have not been a factor in institution's student assessment activities	12%	22%
4. Have been a negative influence on institution's student assessment activities	1%	4%

The information in table 1 illustrates the importance of regional accreditation requirements on both initiating student assessment activities on campuses and increasing institutional involvement in student assessment. It is apparent that regional accreditation associations have a greater influence on institutional assessment activities than do states. Fewer respondents in states with student assessment mandates reported that those mandates were important reasons to initiate assessment or that their state's mandates have increased their involvement in student assessment. The influence of the state is certainly felt by these respondents, but not as strongly as is the influence of regional accrediting associations.

To investigate further the role of accrediting regions in prompting institutions to assess students, we conducted regression analysis. Table 2 presents the results of this analysis. The dependent measure in this regression is an index comprised of the extent to which institutions collected student data on 14 types of assessments.[1]

The regression model presented in table 2 has an R squared of .17, indicating a moderate power of explanation. Based on this model, institutional characteristics appear to have more influence than do either state characteristics or accrediting region in stimulating assessment activity. Even though respondents stressed that they conducted assessment to meet accreditation requirements, in terms of their practices, those institutions that reported that they conduct assessment to improve teaching and learning actually collect more data on students. Providing administrative and governance activities promoting student assessment; having a mission statement that emphasizes student assessment and undergraduate educational quality; and administrative and faculty support for student assessment are also important institutional predictors of assessment activity.

Four state characteristics are tested in this model. Only one predictor is significant–if the institution conducts assessment to meet state requirements, the institution actually collects fewer data. It is unknown if this finding is due to states' requirements for data collection or to other reasons. Neither the type of state authority structure, nor the comprehensiveness of the state's mandates for assessment, nor requiring common indicators / outcomes has an effect on how much data institutions collect on students.

In testing the effect of accrediting region, the model used location in a specific region as a predictor. Institutions located in both the Northwest and the Western accrediting regions collect less information than is the institutional

Table 2.
Assessment Approach Regressed on Institutional Dynamics, State Characteristics, and Accrediting Region

	All Institutions	
	Beta	ΔR^2
R^2	.17	
Institutional Dynamics		
Mission emphasis on assessment and undergraduate education	.13**	.02
Providing administrative / governance activities promoting assessment	.17**	.04
Faculty and administrative support for assessment	.08*	.01
Conducting student assessment to improve teaching & learning	.17**	.06
State Characteristics		
Conducting assessment to meet state requirements	-.11**	.01
State authority structure		
State's initiative for assessment		
State's requirements for common indicators/outcomes		
Accrediting Region		
Conducting assessment to prepare for a self-study		
Located in North Central accrediting region		
Located in Middle States accrediting region[7]	N/A	N/A
Located in New England accrediting region		
Located in Northwest accrediting region	-.10**	.01
Located in Southern accrediting region		
Located in Western accrediting region	-.19**	.03

$^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$

average (represented by institutions in the Middle States region). However, being located in the North Central, New England, or Southern accrediting region has no influence on the amount of data institutions collect.

☐ Institutions in the North Central Association Accrediting Region

The analyses presented above indicate that institutions ascribe their assessment initiatives at least partly to the influence of accrediting regions. Accrediting regions, at this time, appear to have more influence on student assessment programs than do states. However, when it comes to actually collecting data, institutions that are conducting assessment to improve teaching and learning collect more data than do institutions that are conducting assessment to meet accreditation requirements. This finding would likely be welcomed by accrediting associations as they do not wish to divorce student assessment efforts from improving teaching and learning.

Although institutions in the North Central Association accrediting region were not distinguishable from the Southern or the New England region in terms of the amount of data they collect, they do stand out from all other accrediting regions in several ways. The differences between institutions in the NCA region (N = 529) and all other institutions (total N = 864) were detected by using t-tests to determine differences between means. All the differences discussed below are significant at the .05 level or below.

Based on this analysis, institutions in the NCA region are more highly influenced by and involved with their accrediting region than are all other institutions. NCA institutions are more likely to report that accreditation requirements both were an important reason to initiate assessment and have increased their involvement in assessment. According to the respondents, NCA also requires more information than do other accrediting associations. NCA institutions reported that they are more likely to be required to demonstrate evidence of an assessment plan, intended uses of assessment data, results of assessment, and evidence of use of assessment data. It is not, therefore, surprising that NCA institutions are also more likely to report that they conduct assessment in order to meet self-study guidelines for their accrediting region. NCA institutions are also more likely to use services provided by the accrediting association than are institutions in other accrediting regions. NCA institutions are more likely to use North Central consulting services and publications and they are more likely to attend conferences and training workshops provided by North Central.

Although institutions in the NCA region are more likely to be influenced by and involved with their accrediting regions, they are not necessarily more likely to have internal policies supporting and promoting assessment. They are more likely to offer professional development for faculty and administrators on student assessment; involve students in the assessment process; provide governance activities supporting assessment; have a formal policy for assessing students on campus; and have a committee that guides the assessment process. However, NCA institutions are less likely to promote student assessment in their mission statements; involve student affairs personnel in the assessment process; use computers to manage the assessment process; provide access to assessment data for internal constituents; and to garner external grants to support assessment initiatives.

Despite this mixed description of an internal "climate" for student assessment, institutions in the NCA region are more likely to use a greater number of instruments in collecting assessment data and they collect more cognitive data (i.e., higher order skills and competence in major) than do all other institutions. They do not score lower than other institutions on any measure of collecting data, indicating that they collect at least as much data as do all other institutions.

However, institutions in the NCA region report lower usage levels of assessment data than do all other institutions. NCA institutions are less likely to use student assessment data to make either educational decisions (such as revising an academic program) or faculty decisions (such as promotional decisions). This finding is surprising, given that institutions in the NCA region are more likely to be required to provide evidence of the use of student assessment data.

☐ Improving Uses of Student Assessment

The analyses presented above illustrate that while NCA institutions are highly aware of and involved with their accrediting association, they are not necessarily using student assessment data in making educational and faculty decisions—actions that can lead to institutional improvement. The following regression analysis attempts to discern why NCA institutions are not making as much use of student assessment data as are other institutions. Table 3 presents academic decisions and faculty decisions regressed on several external and internal predictor variables. The model on academic decisions (R-squared = .41) is stronger than the model on faculty decisions (R-squared = .15).

Given the analyses presented earlier, it is not surprising that being located in the North Central accrediting region has a negative influence on whether student assessment data are used to make either educational or faculty decisions. By combining the results of earlier analyses specifying how NCA institutions compare to all other institutions with the results displayed in table 3, one can determine suggestions for NCA institutions to increase the use of student assessment data in educational and faculty decisions. NCA institutions already score highly in collecting cognitive student assessment data, offering professional development on student assessment, involving students in the assessment process, and providing governance activities—all activities that should lead to a greater use of assessment data in decision-making. However, NCA institutions are not as likely to involve student affairs professionals in the assessment process, use computers to manage the assessment process, provide access to assessment data, or have policies to use student assessment data in evaluating faculty. Incorporating these four actions should increase the use of student assessment data in decision-making. NCA institutions scored neither high nor low on the following activities: conducting assessment to improve the teaching and learning process; using student-centered methods for assessing students (i.e., student portfolios); using external methods to conduct assessment (i.e., interviewing employers); conducting internal assessment studies; having faculty and administrative support for assessment; evaluating the assessment process; having a policy to use assessment data in academic planning and review; using assessment data in the budgeting process; and providing assessment reports. Engaging in these activities should also increase the use of assessment data in educational and faculty-related decision-making.

Summary

Institutions attribute their assessment activities, at least partly, to regional accreditation requirements. These requirements appear to have a stronger influence than do state mandates for student assessment. However, institutions that conduct assessment to improve the teaching and learning process are more likely to collect a greater amount of data than are institutions that conduct assessment to meet accreditation requirements.

Table 3.
External and Internal Influences on Academic Uses of Student Assessment Data[3]

	Educational Decisions		Faculty Decisions	
	Beta	ΔR²	Beta	ΔR²
R²	.41		.15	
External Influences				
Located in Middle States				
Located in North Central	-.06*	<.01	-12**	.01
Located in New England				
Located in Southern	.06*	.01		
Located in Western				
Engaging in assessment for accreditation purposes				
Influence of accrediting region				
State initiative for assessment				
State approach to assessment				
Engaging in assessment for state purposes				
Institutional Characteristics				
Enrollment				
Associate of arts institution				
Baccalaureate institution			.13**	.01
Doctoral institution				
Research institution				
Institutional Approach				
Extent of cognitive assessment data collected	.09*	.01		
Extent of affective data collected				
Extent of post-college data collected				
Number of instruments used to collect data				
Use of student-centered methods	.09*	.01	.11**	.03
Use of external methods to collect data			.06*	<.01
Number of assessment studies conducted	.14**	.06	.10*	.02
Organizational and Administrative Support				
Mission emphasis on assessment and undergraduate quality				
Conduct assessment to improve teaching & learning	.14**	.14		
Provide governance activities promoting assessment	.05*	<.01		
Have administrative & faculty support for assessment	.06**	<.01		
Have a formal policy for assessment				
Have an institution-wide planning group				
Have evaluated assessment process	.06**	<.01		
Assessment Management Policies & Practices				
Use assessment for academic planning and review	N/A		.11**	.05
Incorporate assessment data into budget decisions			.07**	.01
Use computers to manage assessment	.06**	<.01		
Provide access to assessment data			.09**	.01
Distribute assessment reports widely	.10**	.02		
Involve students in assessment process	.10**	.03		
Provide professional development on assessment	.11**	.01	.11**	.01
Involve student affairs professionals in assessment	.12**	.09		
Use assessment data to evaluate faculty	.11**	.03	N/A	

**<.05; **<.01*

North Central Association institutions have a strong relationship with NCA, in that they are both heavily influenced by and involved with the association. However, this influence to engage in assessment does not result automatically in strong climates for institutional assessment, in terms of the institutional support provided on the campuses. Furthermore, NCA institutions are not doing as well as are all other institutions in terms of using student assessment data to make educational and faculty decisions.

If institutions in the NCA region want to increase their use of student assessment data, they may want to augment the involvement of student affairs professionals in assessment, the use of computers to manage the assessment process, access to assessment data, and policies to use student assessment data in evaluating faculty. These are all activities that predict greater use of assessment data, and are ones that NCA institutions are not participating in as much as are other institutions.

Notes

[1] 1) student academic intentions; 2) basic skills; 3) higher-order skills; 4) general education competencies; 5) major competence; 6) vocational skills; 7) affective development; 8) involvement; 9) satisfaction; 10) academic progress; 11) vocational outcomes of former students; 12) further education; 13) civic or social roles of former students; 14) satisfaction of former students.

[2] Since "accrediting region" was a categorical variable, Middle States Region was left out of this regression because its affect on assessment approach, based on ANOVA, was closest to the mean.

[3] For variable operationalization and other methodological details, please see *Institutional Support for Student Assessment: Methodology and Results of a National Survey.*

[4] Northwest was left out of the regression analysis as its scores were closest to the mean for the regressed variables.

[5] Comprehensive institutions were left out of the regression analysis because their scores were closest to the mean for the regressed variables.

References

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). 1992. *Principles of good practice for assessing student learning.* Washington, DC: AAHE.

Aper, J. P., S. M. Cuver, and D. E. Hinkle. 1990. Coming to terms with the accountability versus improvement debate in assessment. *Higher Education* 20:471-483.

Banta, T. W. 1993. Summary and conclusion: Are we making a difference? In *Making a difference: Outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education,* ed. T. W. Banta and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T. W. and Associates, eds. 1993. *Making a difference: Outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cole, J. J. K., M. T. Nettles, and S. Sharp. 1997. *Assessment of teaching and learning for improvement and accountability: State governing, coordinating board and regional accreditation association policies and practices.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

Ewell, P. T. 1988. Outcomes, assessment, and academic improvement: In search of usable knowledge. In *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research,* Vol. 4, ed. J. C. Smart. New York: Agathon Press.

——. 1997. Strengthening assessment for academic quality improvement. In *Planning and management for a changing environment: A handbook on redesigning postsecondary institutions,* ed. M. W. Peterson, D. D. Dill, L. A. Mets and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Muffo, J. A. 1992. The status of student outcomes assessment at NASULGC member institutions. *Research in Higher Education* 33:765-74.

Nichols, J. O. 1990. The role of institutional research in implementing institutional effectiveness or outcomes assessment. *AIR Professional File* No. 37:1-6.

Peterson, M. W., C. H. Augustine, M. K. Einarson, and D. S. Vaughan. 1999a. *Designing student assessment to strengthen institutional performance in associate of arts institutions.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

——. 1999b. *Designing student assessment to strengthen institutional performance in baccalaureate institutions.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

——. 1999a. *Institutional support for student assessment: Methodology and results of a national survey.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

——. 1999b. *Designing student assessment to strengthen institutional performance in comprehensive institutions.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

——. 1999c. *Designing student assessment to strengthen institutional performance in research and doctoral institutions.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

Peterson, M. W., M. K. Einarson, A. G. Trice, and A. R. Nichols. 1997. *Improving organizational and administrative support for student assessment: A review of research literature.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

Steele, J. M. and D. A. Lutz. 1995. *Report of ACT's research on postsecondary assessment needs.* Iowa: American College Testing Program.

Marvin W. Peterson is a Professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Catherine Augustine is a Graduate Student Research Assistant at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

The Adult Learning Focused Institution

Thomas Flint
Ruth Frey

The New College Student

Adults are pursuing a college education in increasing numbers, creating a new majority on many campuses. Research on adults and higher education tells us that adults learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning experience (Cross 1981); that due to multiple constraints there is a need for flexible times for services (Chickering and Reisser 1993); and that the curriculum is most effective when it builds upon the life experiences and interests of the adult learner (Merriam and Caffafella 1991). But although we know how to help adults achieve a college education, many institutions still provide programs and services that are ill-suited to adults' needs.

The critical need to rethink practices in higher education is succinctly stated in one of the findings of the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners: "Many current higher education practices are ill-adapted to the needs of employers and adult learners. They pose barriers to participation, including a lack of flexibility in calendar and scheduling, academic content, modes of instruction, and availability of learning services, among others (Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners 1997)." This assessment is not a new one. In recent years, guidelines for "good practice" have been developed and promoted by higher education associations in order to adapt to the unique needs of adults. Yet, most of these guidelines represent idealized goals. Given the myriad principles, practices, and models in the literature about serving adult learners in higher education, a key question is: What are the actual "best practices" being used in colleges and universities in the U.S. and beyond?

CAEL's Study

As part of its mission to make the benefits of learning accessible to adults throughout their lives, CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) has embarked on a project to identify ways for colleges and universities to better serve adult learners.

CAEL began this project by conducting a benchmarking study to find out how colleges and universities meet the needs of adult learners. Benchmarking is a technique commonly employed in the corporate world to help organizations identify, understand, and adapt outstanding practices in particular areas of operation. CAEL used a multi-step methodology to nominate, screen, and study colleges and universities with the "best practices" for adult learners.

From a limited sample of nominated institutions, the following six colleges and universities were selected as "best practice" institutions:

- Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta, Canada
- School of New Resources, College of New Rochelle, New York, New York
- The School for New Learning, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois
- Empire State College (SUNY), Saratoga Springs, New York
- Marylhurst University, Marylhurst, Oregon
- Sinclair Community College, Dayton, Ohio

It should be noted that a "best practice" institution is not synonymous with the "world's best" institution. Every institution faces challenges and strives for improvement in many areas. This is true of the "best practice" institutions in this study. However, in these six colleges and universities CAEL found the most comprehensively effective practices in serving adult learners from among the group of institutions that chose to participate.

The Benchmarking Study Findings

The complex findings from the benchmarking study were distilled into one overarching theme and eleven findings. The overarching theme reflects the centrality of the adult learner in all that a college or university does. The eleven findings are organized around the operational or structural elements of what CAEL calls an "Adult Learning Focused Institution of Higher Education." In this paper, CAEL offers a brief overview of the key findings. The complete study findings, including examples from the "best practice" institutions and a more comprehensive discussion on benchmarking, are available in CAEL's latest publication, *Best Practices in Adult Learning* (Flint and Associates 1999).

◇ **Overarching theme of the key findings.** The Adult Learning Focused Institution of Higher Education has a culture in which adult-centered learning, sensitivity to learners' needs, flexibility, and communication drive institutional practice.

a) **Mission:** The Adult Learning Focused Institution has a clearly articulated mission that permeates the institution and inspires and directs practice.

b) **Decision-making:** Institutional decision-making at the Adult Learning Focused Institution is a shared responsibility that uses collaborative processes inclusive of faculty, staff, and adult learners to create rapid, flexible responses to learner and community needs.

c) **Admission:** The Adult Learning Focused Institution uses an inclusive, non-competitive admissions process to determine the best educational match for the adult learner.

d) **Educational planning:** The Adult Learning Focused Institution engages adult learners in an ongoing dialogue designed to assist them with making informed educational planning decisions.

e) **Faculty roles:** Faculty at the Adult Learning Focused Institution function as managers and facilitators of the learning process, not merely as dispensers of information.

f) **Teaching-learning process:** The teaching-learning process at the Adult Learning Focused Institution actively involves adult learners in collaborative learning experiences typically centered around their lives and work.

g) **Curriculum design and instructional delivery:** The curriculum and instructional delivery at the Adult Learning Focused Institution are designed to help adult learners meet their learning goals.

h) **Student services:** The Adult Learning Focused Institution makes student services easily accessible and convenient through a variety of access points.

i) **Adjunct faculty:** Part-time and adjunct faculty at the Adult Learning Focused Institution are valued for their connections to workplaces and communities, and for providing an accessible and flexible curriculum.

j) **Information technology:** The Adult Learning Focused Institution focuses information technology on enriching one-to-one communication and providing flexible and timely education and administrative services that meet the needs of adult learners.

k) **Affordability:** The Adult Learning Focused Institution makes continuous and deliberate efforts to ensure simultaneously the affordability, accessibility, and quality of educational degrees and programs.

Principles of Effectiveness of the Adult Learning Focused Institution

While the benchmarking study focused on the perspectives of higher education, the next stage in the project involved gathering the perspectives of the "consumers" of higher education. CAEL conducted focus groups and discussions with business people, labor representatives, and adult learners themselves to test the findings from the benchmarking study and to identify other issues that are critical to them. This comprehensive investigation built on the benchmarking study and surfaced different or additional issues that are particularly important to the adult learners and their employers.

The benchmarking study and the focus groups helped CAEL develop Principles of Effectiveness for the Adult Learning Focused Institution. The Principles describe processes and approaches that need to be addressed by colleges and universities seeking to offer an effective educational experience to adults. The Principles are a framework for a forthcoming inventory of practices and institutional self-assessment tool.

The Principles of Effectiveness of the Adult Learning Focused Institution include statements on:

- **Support for the Adult Learner.** The institution builds systems of academic and motivational support for adult learners at numerous points of contact, including the means to assist prospective students to become college-ready.
- **Strategic Partnerships.** The institution initiates strategic relationships with organizations to develop and improve educational opportunities for workers.

At the time of publication of this briefing paper, CAEL's initial set of "Principles of Effectiveness" is posted on the CAEL web site (www.CAEL.org) for public commentary and feedback. CAEL invites comments on the Principles from all sectors affected by the large numbers of adults returning to learning. Responses to the Principles will aid in refining and revising them. The focus of CAEL's presentation at the North Central Association Annual Meeting will be on the Principles of Effectiveness for the Adult Learning Focused Institution and their implications for higher education and adult learners.

Summary

CAEL undertook this project with the aim of fostering improvement among institutions of higher education in a effort to assure adult learners an accessible and effective education. In addition to the Principles of Effectiveness, CAEL will develop tools and resources to assist colleges and universities to assess and—where necessary—restructure policies and procedures to better serve adult learners. It is our hope that this project will help all who believe that lifelong learning is central to the vitality of individuals and communities and the foundation of a productive workforce.

References

Chickering, A. W., and L. Reisser. 1993. *Education and identity.* 2d ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners. 1997. *A nation learning: Vision for the 21st century.* Albany, N.Y.: Regents College.

Cross, K. P. 1981. *Adults as learners.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Flint, Thomas A., and Associates. 1999. *Best practices in adult learning: A CAEL/APQC benchmarking study.* New York: Forbes Custom Publishing.

Merriam, S. B., and R. S. Caffarella. 1991. *Learning in adulthood.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Thomas Flint is President of Lifelong Learning at the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning in Chicago.

Ruth Frey is Project Manager at the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning in Chicago.

Defining Good Practice in Adult Degree Programs

Patricia Brewer
Eugene Sullivan

> "Among the more important characteristics of a profession are the will and collective energy to define its own standards and to establish the principles by which good practice may be judged," (James Harrington, 1987-88 President of The Alliance).

Thus begins the Preamble to the 1990 *Principles of Good Practice for Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults*, a set of guidelines for practitioners in adult higher education, college and university administration, faculty and students, and institutional accrediting bodies. This set of principles was written and has been used during the past decade to guide program development or review in light of the special context of adult learners and adult learning.

Background

During the past four decades, higher education has made considerable strides in recognizing a growing population of students: adult learners. Many of these adults deferred or interrupted their academic goals for reasons of work, family, and other commitments; others were not ready for college when they were younger; and many find that lifelong learning is required for professional development, active citizenship, and personal satisfaction.

As they began to recognize the educational needs of these adult students, many institutions developed academic degree programs especially designed to serve them. Traditional programs were taken off campus or offered at new times; other existing programs were adapted for this new population; and some innovative degree programs were developed to serve the needs of adults. These programs provide many features such as flexible scheduling, student-designed majors, prior learning evaluation, on-site instruction, distance learning, self-directed independent study, and other creative approaches to academic content and educational process.

The names of degree programs designed for adults vary in relation to their format, methodology, and audience. They might be called external, alternative, special, off-campus, weekend, individualized, general studies, or one of many other titles. Some programs focus on content and organization while others concentrate on different modes of instruction and opportunities for learning. While content, structure, and procedures may vary widely from program to program, a common denominator has been the intended audience of adult students, generally those in their mid-twenties and older.

Degree programs for adults may be offered in various academic structures. The degree program may be the single goal of a free-standing institution; it may represent a major unit within a college or university; it may be an extension of other institutional services; or it may be a small department within a larger college or university.

Regardless of structure, however, the central concern for the adult degree program movement has been balancing quality and standards with access and program design to meet adult learning needs. These issues have been, and must continue to be, framed within the academic context of the higher education institutions (including the full range of associate to doctoral granting institutions) offering the programs. But while general institutional goals and standards must remain consistent for all academic programs, the policies, practices, and standards necessary to serve adult students require particular attention.

Process

For many years this attention to program quality has come through activities such as program evaluations, graduate surveys, self-studies, and accreditation reviews. Professional organizations have provided forums for the discussion of these critical issues. Two groups that have been especially involved with this effort are the American Council on Education and the Adult Higher Education Alliance. A task force, representing membership from both organizations, worked from 1987-1990 to delineate and write a set of principles of good practice that could be observed and judged. As the document took shape, it was critiqued repeatedly by professionals from throughout the United States who represented varied programs, institutions, and agencies within higher education. The purpose and objectives of these principles are consistent with those expected for any academic program; however, they stress consideration of the special contexts, experiences, needs, and conditions of adult students.

Overview of the Principles of Good Practice

The Principles reference eight categories associated with program organization. In addition, sub-principles (not reprinted here) clarify and elaborate upon each of the eight main principles. Knowledge and use of adult learning theory is integrated throughout the guidelines.

- **Principle 1: Mission Statement.** The program has a mission statement that reflects an educational philosophy, goals, purposes, and general intent, and that clearly complements the institutional mission.
- **Principle 2: Personnel—Faculty and Academic Professionals.** Faculty and academic professionals working in alternative and external degree programs share a commitment to serve adult learners and have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to teach, advise, counsel, and assist such students.
- **Principle 3: Learning Outcomes.** Clearly articulated programmatic learning outcomes frame the comprehensive curriculum as well as specific learning experiences; in developing these outcomes the program incorporates general student goals.
- **Principle 4: Learning Experiences.** The program is designed to provide diverse learning experiences that respond to the characteristics and contexts of adult learners while meeting established academic standards.
- **Principle 5: Assessment of Student Learning.** The assessment of a student's learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes.
- **Principle 6: Student Services.** The policies, procedures, and practices of the program take into account the conditions and circumstances of adult learners and promote the success of those students.
- **Principle 7: Program Administration.** The administrative structures and the human, fiscal, and learning resources are sufficient, appropriate, and stable for accomplishing the program mission.
- **Principle 8: Program Evaluation.** Evaluation of the program involves faculty, academic professionals, administrators, and students on a continuing, systematic basis to assure quality and standards, and to stimulate program improvement.

Use of the Principles

In the decade that has passed since the Principles were completed and published, they have been used by adult higher education professionals as guidelines for the development of new programs or to complete self-studies of existing programs (i.e., Gianetti, N. and Nemecek, J., 1998). Adult degree programs have asked that outside reviewers use the Principles as a framework for program evaluation; program evaluators have independently used them to guide their work. The Principles have been recommended to regional accrediting agencies, including WASC, Middle States, SACS, and North Central. In addition, they have been the focus of one completed dissertation (Balzer, W., 1996) and another in progress.

The Principles and the Criteria for Accreditation

It can be noted that good practice principles tend to be consistent across programs and the associations that evaluate them. This set of principles of good practice is not a comprehensive guide for all NCA criteria; however, use of the

Principles for programmatic self-study will, in part, guide an adult degree program in the following areas of program review.

Criterion One:	"The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education."	*Principle 1*
Criterion Two:	"The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes."	*Principles 2 and 7*
Criterion Three:	"The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes."	*Principles 3, 4, 5, 6*
Criterion Four:	"The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness."	*Principle 8*
Criterion Five:	"The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships."	

While NCA specifies that the Commission does not endorse statements of good practice promulgated by other organizations, The Handbook of Accreditation, Second Edition, p. 59, does recommend that affiliated institutions give such statements careful attention. Adult degree programs serve a particular and growing constituency, and issues of programmatic and institutional integrity can be addressed by use of this set of principles.

Related Initiatives

The American Council on Education and the Adult Higher Education Alliance both have continued the focus on quality standards in adult higher education. *Guiding Principles for Distance Learning in a Learning Society* and the accompanying evaluation guide (ACE, 1996) focus on quality issues in distance education.

The Adult Learning Outcomes Research Project, with principal investigators Morry Fiddler and Catherine Marienau (School for New Learning at DePaul University), identified those competencies that are essential for adult degree programs, as articulated by students, colleges and universities, and the world of work. Phase I of this research project was sponsored (primarily) by the Adult Higher Education Alliance and School for New Learning, and was supported by the volunteer efforts of educators at twenty-five institutions that are part of the Alliance network. Phase II of this project will focus on application of the outcomes in specific adult degree programs and the development of local assessment methodologies.

Conclusion

The development of non-traditional degree programs for adult learners has flourished in the past twenty-five years. Practitioners and administrators from these programs value the process of program review and self-study as much as their traditional counterparts, particularly because of the need to demonstrate that alternative degree formats can maintain and promote academic quality within alternative formats. A continuing need exists, however, to guide the adult degree program review processes by criteria that are responsive to the needs of the accrediting body and are cognizant of the context of adult learning. *The Principles of Good Practice for Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults* is one tool available for those adult educators who value the role of "steward" in institutions of higher learning.

References

American Council on Education (ACE). 1996. *Guiding principles of distance learning in a learning society.* Washington, D.C.: ACE Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials.

American Council on Education (ACE). 1996. *Guiding principles of distance learning in a learning society, evaluation guide.* Washington, D.C.: ACE Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials.

American Council on Education (ACE) and The Alliance. 1990. *Principles of good practice for alternative and external degree programs for adults.* Washington, D.C.: ACE Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials.

Balzer, W. 1996. *Utilization of the principles of good practice in adult degree completion programs (coalition of Christian colleges and universities)*. DAI-A 57 (4 October): 1436.

Gianetti, N., and J. Nemecek. 1998. *Principles of good practice as program self-assessment.* Paper presented at the 18th Annual Alliance/American Council on Education Conference in San Diego, Calif.

Marienau, C., and M. Fiddler. 1996. *Adult learning outcomes research project.* Paper presented at the 16th Annual Alliance/American Council on Education Conference in St. Petersburg, Fla.

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA/CIHE). 1997. *Handbook of accreditation,* 2d ed. Chicago: NCA/CIHE.

Patricia Brewer is Associate Professor, Experience Based Education, at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio.

Eugene Sullivan is Director, Military Evaluation Programs, at American Council on Education in Washington, DC.

The Urban Universities Portfolio Project (UUPP): Linking Learning, Improvement, and Accountability

Susan Kahn
Sharon Hamilton
Christian Messenger

Purpose

The "Urban Universities Portfolio Project: Assuring Quality for Multiple Publics" brings together six leading urban public universities to develop a new medium: electronic institutional portfolios that demonstrate the universities' effectiveness to various groups of stakeholders. Funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and cosponsored by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the project has three main emphases: to enhance internal and external stakeholders' understanding of the mission of urban public universities; to develop a new approach to cultivating ongoing internal improvement; and to experiment with new ways of demonstrating and evaluating effectiveness and accountability in the context of mission.

Urban Public Universities and Institutional Portfolios

Urban public universities represent a growing, increasingly important sector of U.S. higher education. Many of these universities are pioneering innovations in teaching non-traditional students, widening access, and engaging with their communities. But such work is not reflected in prevailing rating and ranking approaches, which tend to focus on resources and inputs and to assume a traditional paradigm for higher education institutions and students. The missions and accomplishments of urban universities and the particular challenges they face may thus be poorly understood by such external stakeholders as accreditors, state governments, students and parents, and the communities the universities serve. One purpose of the UUPP is to build greater public awareness of the contributions of urban public universities and to establish benchmarks that will allow them to be compared with appropriate peers.

The institutional portfolios under development serve as vehicles for capturing the distinctive characteristics, work, and accomplishments of urban public universities. The portfolios combine authentic materials, such as student work samples, with assessment data and reflective critique to show the outcomes the universities aim to produce, the processes and practices used to work toward those outcomes, and the actual results achieved. Student learning experiences and outcomes, and the ways in which these are shaped by the urban context and mission, are one major focus; community engagement is another. With these focuses in mind, project universities are developing a shared description of "urban public university," measures of effectiveness that reflect the universities' urban missions and characteristics, and models for documenting several fundamental learning outcomes. The portfolios incorporate this collaborative work to demonstrate the universities' skills in assessment and self-correction, and their commitment to continuous improvement, all in the context of their particular urban missions and educational aspirations.

Other types of higher education institutions may also have much to gain from this kind of work. An important product of the UUPP will thus be a set of principles and guidelines for constructing electronic institutional portfolios that will be applicable across the spectrum of higher education. (To view initial versions of several institutional portfolios, please consult the UUPP web site at the URL provided below.)

New Approaches to Improvement and Accountability

Another aspect of the project may also be of interest to other institutions and to accrediting organizations: the developing portfolios form the basis for new approaches to both internal improvement and external evaluation of institutional effectiveness. Over the course of the last year-and-a-half, UUPP universities have found that creating an institutional portfolio brings about substantial internal benefits. The complexity of the project demands broad campus involvement, creating an occasion for large segments of the university to think together about how particular practices, programs, and initiatives connect with one another and contribute to overall institutional mission. This collaboration is helping to build institutional identity and community, developing and reinforcing shared visions and commitments that lead to meaningful institutional change and improvement. Already, several UUPP universities have launched significant assessment and improvement initiatives resulting directly from their portfolio work.

In addition, the project envisions portfolio development, not as a one-time task, but as an ongoing system that allows a university to monitor its performance and document that performance for internal and external stakeholders. The electronic portfolio web sites will thus evolve continuously, demonstrating changes and improvements unfolding over real time. In this way, the portfolio concept incorporates the idea of continuous, rather than episodic, self-assessment and improvement.

As the portfolios develop, the UUPP is experimenting with ways in which site visits and institutional portfolios might complement one another, leading to new approaches that external evaluators, especially accreditors, might use to learn about and evaluate institutions. Experimental visits in Spring 2000 and Spring 2001 will use the portfolios and other evidence provided by the universities to examine learning outcomes as well as institutions' processes for assuring educational quality and effectiveness. Visitors will consider such questions as: How has the institution developed systems for assessing its own performance? What are the standards of evidence? What are the results?

At the same time, visit teams will be seeking ways to make the visit process itself more valuable for everyone involved. The Spring 2000 visits will combine virtual "visits" to the portfolio sites with physical visits to the universities. The project will study how virtual visits can be done most effectively, and how actual visits change when they follow virtual ones. The project will also examine the role of visitors: for example, can visitors combine consultative and evaluative roles in effective ways? How can visitors help the institution become a learning organization? How can accreditation and other forms of review be as productive as possible? Lessons from the Spring 2000 visits will be used to modify the plans and procedures for a second round of visits in Spring 2001.

Participants

The lead university for the UUPP is Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). The other participating institutions are California State University, Sacramento; Georgia State University; Portland State University; the University of Illinois at Chicago; and the University of Massachusetts Boston. A National Advisory Board of distinguished members representing government, business, foundations, and higher education advises the project about its aims, practices, and progress. An Institutional Review Board, comprised of higher education leaders and members of accrediting organizations, works with the participating institutions on portfolio development, participates in site visits, and contributes ideas and expertise to the project as a whole.

A project leadership team provides overall direction for the initiative. Members include Margaret A. Miller, President of AAHE; Barbara Cambridge, Director of AAHE's Teaching Initiatives and Associate Dean of Faculties at IUPUI; William M. Plater, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of Faculties at IUPUI; Susan Kahn, UUPP Director and Director of Programs and Planning, Office for Professional Development at IUPUI; and Victor Borden, Director of Information Management and Institutional Research at IUPUI.

In addition, each participating campus has its own project director, who manages the campus-specific work of the project, and an institutional research representative, who oversees development of the institutional research component of the portfolio.

- **Cosponsors:** American Association for Higher Education
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
- **Funding agency:** The Pew Charitable Trusts
- **Project web site:** http://www.imir.iupui.edu/portfolio/

Susan Kahn is Director, Urban Universities Portfolio Project at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.

Sharon Hamilton is Director of Campus Writing at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.

Christian Messenger is Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at University of Illinois at Chicago.

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION, THE COMMISSION AND A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 2

Quality Improvement and Accreditation

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education

Jane Bishop
Jerrilyn Brewer
Dennis Ladwig
Lee Rasch

This paper will provide concrete examples of how quality principles can be applied to higher education by describing how colleges can use the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria to prepare for an NCA re-accreditation visit; how colleges can use a "results-oriented" focus to document student academic achievement; and how colleges can use the results of data collection and analysis to improve student enrollment, retention, and learning. The paper will provide an overview of the Wisconsin Technical College System's (WTCS) Institutional Effectiveness Model, a comparison of Baldrige and NCA criteria, examples of data collection and analysis from two WTCS colleges, and examples of improvement efforts each of the colleges has made.

Overview of the Wisconsin Technical College System's Institutional Effectiveness Model

The WTCS is comprised of 16 technical colleges governed by a Board appointed by the Governor. A State Director, hired by the Board, heads a state-level agency providing system leadership. Each technical college is directed by a president hired by a local board. An administrative structure exists within the system that facilitates information exchange and cooperation with the state agency and among colleges

In late 1992, the colleges and the state agency agreed to contract cooperatively with outside consultants to help develop an Institutional Effectiveness (IE) model specifically designed for the WTCS. The IE model was undertaken as a system-wide effort to identify core indicators that could be used locally by colleges to respond to accountability initiatives, accreditation demands, federal reporting requirements, quality management initiatives, and so forth. A task force was created with representation from various sub-groups of the Administrators Association, the state agency, and other key stakeholders, including faculty unions.

The development of the IE model was a multi-phase process involving review of published documents, reports, and other available data. About 20 focus groups were conducted to obtain input from primary stakeholders regarding: 1) key institutional characteristics of performance outcomes that define effectiveness in the technical college system; and 2) indicators and data gathering methods recommended for measuring effectiveness.

The focus group activities produced a list of more than 100 potential effectiveness indicators. Ultimately, 17 indicators focused on four categories of effectiveness: *Student Achievement and Satisfaction; Employer Satisfaction; Organizational Quality;* and *Public Perception and Satisfaction.* The model provides for assessment of effectiveness and customer satisfaction from entry or initial contact with the college, during college, at exit from college, and after college.

Once the conceptual model of core indicators was established, the next step was to transform the indicators into plans for improving internal college performance while meeting external effectiveness mandates and responding to changing constituent needs. Decisions remained regarding operational definitions, measures and data elements, and the need for system-wide consistency for specific indicators and local adoption and variation for others. A new cross-functional Steering Team was established to provide the system-wide leadership and coordination necessary for this transformation.

The IE Steering Team initially focused on assessment activities that were most indicative of, and important to, student success. This direction was timely in assisting colleges that needed to address external mandates, e.g., NCA was calling for plans to assess student achievement. Eleven of the 17 indicators in the WTCS IE model fall within the category of *Student Achievement and Satisfaction.*

Three work groups were created to focus on student assessment and achievement. The scope of each work group encompassed one or more complementary indicators. Seven of the indicators were to be addressed. Each of the three work groups, namely, 1) Student Goals at Entry and Exit; 2) Student Functional Skills at Entry and Exit; and 3) Course Completion, Student Retention and Withdrawal Rates, and Student Completion and Graduation Rates, was charged with the mission of making recommendations to operationalize the indicators for effective use at the college and/or state level. Over the next two years, some 55 individuals from throughout the WTCS served on work groups. Definitions of effectiveness indicators were refined, parameters clarified, and recommendations offered to operationalize indicators.

The approach used for development of the WTCS Institutional Effectiveness Model was both inclusive and collaborative. The benefits were significant and meaningful both in terms of product and process. The deployment plan for the Institutional Effectiveness Model advanced a process for utilization of valid measures to assess indicators in each domain of institutional effectiveness. The work will continue to be refined and adjusted for changing customer needs and expectations.

Comparing the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria and NCA's Five Criteria

When the NCA criteria and the self-study process is compared to the Baldrige Criteria and the award application process, several similarities emerge. Both are voluntary endeavors. Both have major criteria–NCA has five and Baldrige has seven. Both include written self-studies. Both have prestige associated with them. The goals are similar. The goal of NCA accreditation is self-improvement. The goal of Baldrige is continuous improvement of educational services. Both processes include site visitations by appointed evaluators. An NCA self-study requires inclusion of patterns of evidence, a Baldrige study requires incorporation of areas to address. There are several status levels available for both. For NCA, candidacy status to accreditation status exists. For Baldrige, recommendations of recognition to category winner are available. Both processes require the collection of data elements. The WTCS Institutional Effectiveness model provides an excellent framework for data collection for both NCA and Baldrige self-study processes. (See Tables I and II for correlations of the WTCS Institutional Effectiveness indicators, Baldrige and NCA criteria.)

There are several major differences between the two systems. First, the Baldrige Criteria have point values attached to them. The NCA Criteria do not. Second, the North Central Association has a long history, since it was established in 1895. The Malcolm Baldrige Award and Criteria were established in 1987. Third, the self-study process for NCA is performed every five or ten years and typically is twenty-four months in duration. The Baldrige process is performed annually. Fourth, the NCA Criteria were developed specifically for institutions of higher education. The Malcolm Baldrige Criteria were developed for business and industry.

The most significant differences between NCA and Baldrige pertain to "what" is being evaluated and "who" shapes improvement. The NCA self-study evaluates what is being done and improvement is shaped by faculty and students. Baldrige evaluates "how" it is done, evaluating the approach, deployment, and results. Improvement is shaped by the students and stakeholders. (See Table III for a depiction of the major and minor correlations between the Baldrige Criteria and the NCA Criteria.)

◇ **Baldrige Criterion I (Leadership) primarily correlates with NCA Criterion One (Mission)** since the emphasis of the Leadership Criterion is directed at how upper administration sets directions, seeks future opportunities, and builds and sustains a learning environment. The assumptions behind NCA's Mission Criterion are that the mission statement and purposes are the guides for institutional planning and budgeting and are the framework for governance, administration, and communication.

- **Baldrige Criterion II (Strategic Planning) can be closely correlated to NCA's Criterion Four (Planning).** The intention of the Baldrige Criterion II is to provide a results-oriented focus that accommodates to change and aligns daily work with school directions. Baldrige II therefore examines how a school sets strategic directions and how it develops essential action plans to support those directions. NCA's Criterion Four–Planning–measures stability of institutional leadership, human, financial, and physical resources. Institutional planning and its effect on academic planning and student academic achievement are assessed.

- **Baldrige III (Student and Stakeholder Focus) correlates with NCA Criterion Three (Assessment)** since it examines how a school continually determines the needs of current and future students and its stakeholders. It also analyzes how the school builds relationships with students and stakeholders and how their satisfaction is measured. The NCA assessment criterion provides the impetus to measure ongoing institutional improvement as it relates to the general operation of a college. Institutions are required to develop complete plans of how they assess improvement, specifically in the areas of evaluating and improving teaching and learning.

- **Baldrige IV (Information and Analysis) also correlates with NCA Criterion Three (Assessment).** This Baldrige category examines the selection, management, and effective use of information and data to support key processes and the school's performance management system. NCA's assessment criterion also measures ongoing institutional improvement as it relates to the general operation of a college.

- **Baldrige Criterion V (Faculty and Staff Well-being) correlates with NCA Criterion Three (Assessment)** since the focus of Baldrige V is on how education and training are evaluated and improved. This Baldrige Criterion examines how schools enable faculty and staff to develop their full potential and to create a climate conducive to performance excellence, full participation, and personal and organizational growth. NCA's assessment criterion examines how schools enable faculty and staff to develop their full potential and to create a climate conducive to performance excellence, full participation, and personal and organizational growth.

- **Baldrige Criterion VI (Educational and Support Process Management) correlates with NCA Two (Structure)** since the focus of Baldrige VI in on how key education support processes are designed, implemented, managed and improved. This category examines the key aspects of process management, including learning-focused education design, education delivery, school services, and operations. NCA's structure criterion encompasses governance, administration, faculty credentials, sufficient enrollment, physical plant, academic resources, and financial resources

- **Baldrige Criterion VII (School Performance Results) correlates with NCA Criterion One (Mission)** since the focus of Baldrige VII is on how student performance reflects holistic and mission-related results. Baldrige VII correlates **with NCA Two (Structure)** since the focus of Baldrige VII is on key performance results that contribute to enhanced learning and/or operational effectiveness. Baldrige VII correlates **with NCA Three (Assessment)** since the focus of Baldrige VII is on trends and levels in student and stakeholder satisfaction based on relevant resources. Baldrige VII correlates **with NCA Four (Planning)** since the focus of Baldrige VII is on improvement over time and higher achievement levels relative to comparable schools. Baldrige VII correlates **with NCA Five (Integrity)** since the focus of Baldrige VII is on demonstrating the sensitivity the institution has to educational improvement for all students.

Integrating Baldrige, NCA, and the WTCS Institutional Effectiveness Model

Two colleges in the WTCS–Lakeshore Technical College (LTC), Cleveland, Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC), La Crosse, Wisconsin–are pioneering efforts to merge the self-study processes of NCA and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award within an overall context of continuous quality improvement. By basing their decision to move forward with this integrated effort on the similarities cited above, the two colleges are providing concrete examples of how the NCA re-accreditation process can be used for improvement purposes. By collecting, analyzing, and using data from the Institutional Effectiveness indicators, the colleges are using a "results-oriented" approach for college-wide improvement. Three examples will be given in this paper.

Do We Get Them?

WWTC instituted an aggressive enrollment management program several years ago. The purpose of this program was to monitor the college's enrollment patterns, increase efforts to encourage earlier registration for new students, decrease costs associated with attracting students to the college, and stabilize the college's enrollment. An Enrollment Management Team started to collect data on student enrollment patterns. Data were analyzed and revealed that a large majority of WWTC students enrolled at the college the week prior to and the week of the semester start-up. This information resulted in a major shift in approaches to the college's enrollment campaign. Fewer college schedules were mailed out to all residents of the district; postcards were mailed to prospective students; TV and radio ads were plugged in closer to semester start-up; admissions advisors were hired to provide additional one-on-one student advising. As a result of these efforts, college enrollment has steadily increased over the past three years despite the lowest unemployment rate in years in District communities. Table IV shows the enrollment trend data from 1996-1999.

Do We Keep Them?

LTC is concerned about keeping students and helping them graduate from their programs of choice. Student retention is one of the WTCS Institutional Effectiveness Indicators. Concerned about the attrition rate of students in some of its programs, LTC collected and analyzed data on satisfactory course completion for the Pharmacy Technician program. The graduation rate for Pharmacy Tech was 28.1% for the 1998-99 school year. The retention rate was 13.0% for the non-graduating students. The satisfactory course completion rate for the print-based medical terminology course was 44.0%. This course is a requirement for graduation from the pharmacy tech program.

The Approach to improvement of the situation included: 1) all alternative delivery medical terminology students were surveyed in Fall of 1998; 2) an on-line medical terminology course has been developed to be piloted in Spring of 2000; 3) the current print-based delivery format was abandoned and a new format with more student/teacher interaction developed.

Deployment of the plan has begun. Results will be reported on the basis of the following measures: student satisfaction with the new courses; improved satisfactory course completion; improved graduation rate and retention.

WWTC is also committed to keeping students and to doing everything possible to help them achieve their goals and find successful employment upon completion of their program. Thus, graduation rates are an important indicator of the college's success in keeping students and one of the WTCS Institutional Effectiveness Indicators. WWTC's graduation rates are higher than the national average for other two-year colleges. Approximately 50% of all students graduate from the original program in which they enrolled. More than 55% of all students graduate from either their original program or another program. The college's goal is to increase this percentage by directing its resources to increased student retention efforts. Table V shows graduation rates from 1991-1996 for WWTC.

Do They Learn?

LTC is collecting data on student academic achievement–an NCA requirement as well as one of the WTCS Institutional Effectiveness Indicators. The following case study illustrates how the use of the WTCS Core Indicators of Institutional Effectiveness can lead to continuous improvement. The case study involves the identification of students' entry level skills. This study involves Criterion III of Baldrige–Student and Stakeholder Focus and Criterion Three of NCA, specifically Student Academic Achievement.

Data used to substantiate that a problem existed included: 1) 77% of the entering program students who lacked the necessary entry level skills failed to remediate prior to course enrollment; 2) 89% of these students did not pass their general studies courses; 3) 76% of these students did not re-enroll the following semester.

Approaches used to rectify the situation included:

1. LTC examined Southwestern Wisconsin Technical College's remediation plan and success rates.
2. LTC searched nationwide sources in what was working and what wasn't working.
3. LTC established a task force of counselors, vocational assessors, adult remediation staff, and instructors.
4. The task force examined curriculum and testing protocols and ultimately drafted a required remediation policy and protocol.
5. The task force established accountability measures, an evaluation schedule, and acceptable benchmarks.

6. Finally, the task force helped in inservicing the staff involved in the remediation project.

The Deployment of the plan was carried out during the summer of 1999; the policy and protocol were implemented July 1, 1999. Measurements of success of the plan included: the number of students enrolled in remediation; the number of students completing remediation; the number of students registering in program courses; the percentage of students passing; the percentage of students returning.

Results of the plan accounted for the following actions: 1) procedures and curricula were modified; 2) institution-wide improvement of the following indicators was demonstrated: improvement in satisfactory course completion rates; improvement in retention rate; improvement in graduation rate; improvement in employer satisfaction; improvement in performance of program outcomes.

Summary

This paper has provided concrete examples of how quality principles can be applied to higher education. It has shown that by using a system-wide Institutional Effectiveness model as a framework for data collection, colleges can select appropriate data, analyze the data, and make improvements that will have a positive impact on student enrollment, retention, and learning.

Jane Bishop is Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator at Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland, Wisconsin.

Jerrilyn Brewer is Director of Educational Support Services at Western Wisconsin Technical College in La Crosse.

Dennis Ladwig is President of Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland, Wisconsin.

Lee Rasch is President of Western Wisconsin Technical College in La Crosse.

Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education

Table I

	Baldrige Categories						
IE Core Indicators	**Leadership (1)**	**Strategic Planning Focus (2)**	**Student & Stakeholder (3)**	**Information Analysis (4)**	**Faculty & Staff Focus (5)**	**Educational & Support Process (6)**	**School Performance (7)**
Identification of Student Needs, Goals & Interests (1)		•	•			•	
Identification of Student Functional Skills at Entry (2)		•	•			•	
Course Completion (3)		•		•		•	
Student Grades (4)		•	•	•		•	
Student Satisfaction with Courses, Programs & Services (5)			•		•	•	•
Student Retention / Withdrawal Rates (6)			•		•	•	•
Student Completion & Graduation Rates (7)			•	•	•	•	•
Student Achievement of Educational Goal(s) (8)		•	•	•	•		•
Student Knowledge & Skills at Exit (9)		•	•	•	•		•
Pass Rates/Scores on Licensure Exams (10)			•	•	•		•
Placement Rates/ Employment Success (11)			•	•			•
Employer Satisfaction with Graduates' Work Skills/Performance (12)		•	•	•		•	•
Achievement of Institutional Goals & Standards (13)	•	•	•				•
Organizational Climate (14	•		•		•		•
Articulation & Linkages with External Organizations (15)	•		•			•	•
Identification of Customer Needs & Expectations (16)	•	•	•			•	•
Public Satisfaction (17)	•		•				•

Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn?
Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education

Table II

	NCA Criteria				
IE Core Indicators	**Criterion One Mission**	**Criterion Two Systems**	**Criterion Three Assessment**	**Criterion Four Planning**	**Criterion Five Integrity**
Identification of Student Needs, Goals & Interests (1)			•		
Identification of Student Functional Skills at Entry (2)			•		
Course Completion (3)			•		
Student Grades (4)			•		
Student Satisfaction with Courses, Programs & Services (5)		•	•	•	
Student Retention / Withdrawal Rates (6)			•		
Student Completion & Graduation Rates (7)			•	•	
Student Achievement of Educational Goal(s) (8)			•		
Student Knowledge & Skills at Exit (9)			•	•	
Pass Rates/Scores on Licensure Exams (10)			•		
Placement Rates/ Employment Success (11)			•	•	
Employer Satisfaction with Graduates' Work Skills/Performance (12)			•	•	•
Achievement of Institutional Goals & Standards (13)	•	•		•	•
Organizational Climate (14)	•	•		•	
Articulation & Linkages with External Organizations (15)		•	•	•	
Identification of Customer Needs & Expectations (16)	•		•	•	•
Public Satisfaction (17)	•	•	•		

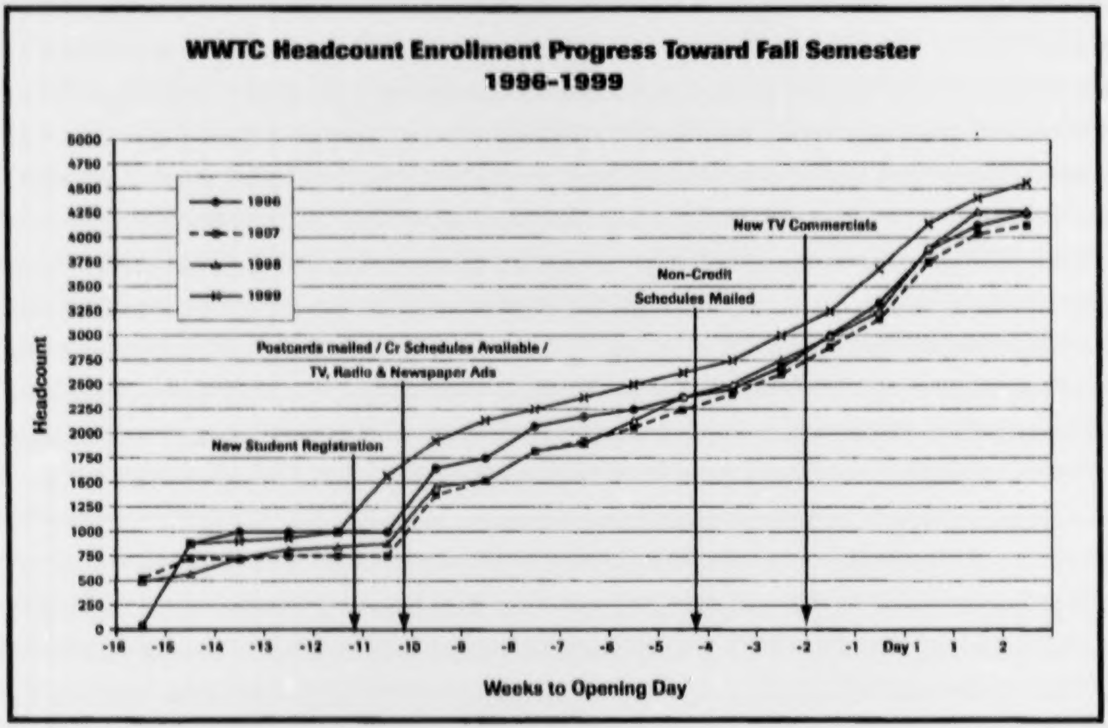
Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education

Table III

	NCA Criteria				
Baldrige Criteria	**Criterion One Mission**	**Criterion Two Systems**	**Criterion Three Assessment**	**Criterion Four Planning**	**Criterion Five Integrity**
Criterion I Leadership	•	•	•	•	•
Criterion II Strategic Planning	•	•	•	•	
Criterion III Student & Stakeholder Focus	•		•	•	•
Criterion IV Information & Analysis	•	•	•	•	
Criterion V Faculty & Staff Focus		•	•	•	•
Criterion VI Educational & Support Processes	•	•	•	•	•
Criterion VII School Performance Results	•	•	•	•	•

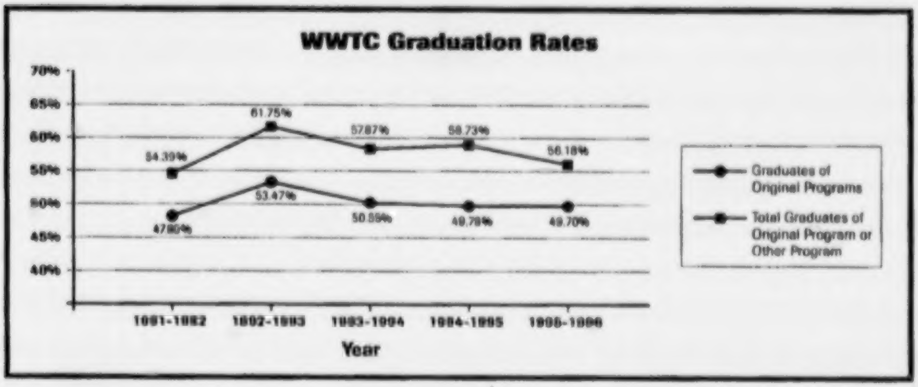
Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education

Table IV



Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education

Table V



When Quality Meets Assessment: The Good, the Better, and the Ugly

Gloria Dohman
Harvey Link
Gary Henrickson

Over the past six years, North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) has experienced both successes and growing pains in the development and combination of a Total Quality Management philosophy and assessment of student learning. This paper will focus mainly on the history of the development of Quality and Assessment initiatives and will demonstrate how two separate initiatives eventually became intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Interestingly, although each of the two initiatives was planned, the intersection of the two was not. Nonetheless the complementarity of the two initiatives was such that Quality and Assessment programs grew together in an almost organic fashion, surprising even their administrative and faculty supporters.

The Total Quality Initiative

In the **1990-91** academic year, the State Board of Higher Education for North Dakota, under the direction of Chancellor Douglas Treadway, directed the entire North Dakota University system to undertake a Total Quality Management initiative. NDSCS responded quickly to this initiative, forming "Team Science" in June 1991. The following academic year, all NDSCS employees began a 20-40 hour "Acquaintanceship Training" program and a part-time Quality Coordinator was appointed to lead the quality effort. Although the Quality initiative seemed well under way at this point, a threatened administrative merger with another college temporarily diverted campus energies, particularly in the **1992-93** academic year.

In **1993-94,** NDSCS sent six persons to Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, Wisconsin, for formal training and the college purchased the Fox Valley Quality curriculum. Campus workshops on Quality began immediately following. NDSCS also established a Quality Council made up of nine members from across the campus. At approximately the same time, the Quality Coordinator became Director of Quality and Assessment. The combination of responsibilities for Quality and Assessment seemed natural, even though they were still considered separate initiatives. After initial classes for administrators, training in Quality began in earnest for support staff and faculty.

The following year, **1994-95,** saw 67 instructors complete Quality training. In addition, the campus Quality standards were revised and a Quality Academy was created. The Quality Council instituted a Quality Reward and Recognition Program, presenting 84 awards ranging from a free cup of coffee to a highly prestigious "Medallion Award." In one of the first "spillovers" affecting NDSCS, the campus Performance Appraisal process was thoroughly revised to focus on performance improvement rather than simply on performance evaluation. In a less obvious "spillover," Quality facilitation techniques and management tools came into play in the development of the 1994 NDSCS Strategic Plan.

By the end of the **1995-96** academic year, the campus culture was beginning to change as 284 campus employees had completed 36 hours of training and the quality survey demonstrated sustained improvement. In the spring of 1996, a Campus Governance plan was written based on quality management principles. Finally, Quality training for faculty, staff, and administrators continued, as in fact it continues into the present.

The Assessment Initiative

In one sense, formal assessment of learning on the NDSCS campus began even before NCA's first call for campus assessment in 1989. However, assessment before 1993 was largely limited to entry-level testing through the NDSCS

Learning Skills Center (later re-named the Academic Services Center). The NCA initial call to assess and document student achievement came in **1989** while NDSCS was in the midst of an NCA accreditation self-study. By the time of NCA's second call for assessment in August **1993,** NDSCS had already begun to act. In July 1993, the position of Director of Quality and Assessment was established. The Assessment Committee, once primarily limited to basic skills assessment, was reconfigured. Sub-committees for Entry Level Assessment and General Education Assessment were also established. A draft of a General Education Assessment Plan was begun based on the framework established by NDSCS's "Philosophy of General Education."

The following year, **1994-95,** a college-wide Assessment Plan was developed and approved by NCA well head of the NCA deadline. In recognition of the importance of assessment, the Entry Level Assessment and General Education Assessment sub-committees became permanent standing committees. In accordance with the campus Assessment Plan, fully one-third of individual program assessment plans (36) were completed during **1995-96,** in addition to plans for the Academic Services Center and for Outreach and Customized Training.

An additional one-third of program assessment plans were completed the following academic year, in **1996-97.** Even as these plans were being brought forward, some selected programs from the previous year completed their first assessment reports. All of these plans and reports were reviewed by the standing Assessment Committee, which then prepared a one-page Annual Assessment Report. By contrast, the 1998-99 Annual Assessment Report is 31 pages, which is one indication of how much growth has occurred in assessment between 1996 and the present. The last third of program assessment plans were completed in **1997-98.** Again, as these last plans were approved by the Assessment Committee, those programs and departments with existing plans submitted annual reports to the committee.

However, the need for more coordination and more participation in assessment soon became apparent. NDSCS responded by modifying its 1998-99 academic calendar, shifting two faculty work days to the end of spring semester. This provides dedicated faculty time to work on assessment without interference of other duties. In addition, an "Assessment Week" was created that takes place at mid-term in the fall and the spring semesters. This week allows campus employees and students to focus on the assessment of student learning. As part of the initial fall Assessment Week, an NCA Associate Director, Cecilia López, visited campus and spoke formally and informally to a variety of campus groups and guests from other colleges in Minnesota and North Dakota. By the end of the 1998-99 academic year, NDSCS had completed Assessment Plans for all 38 programs on campus. In addition, the college had completed its third annual Assessment Report and revised the campus Assessment Plan for the third time. It should be noted that, in the spirit of continuous improvement, the initial plan called for the plan to be reviewed every two years.

When Quality Meets Assessment

Although the preceding narrative has been very linear ("a" then "b" then "c"), the developing relationship between the Quality and Assessment initiatives is less easy to describe. Further, it is difficult to date the development of this relationship, largely because one could argue that the two initiatives began to overlap more because of their intrinsic symbiosis than because of any conscious plan. In retrospect, we can observe this interaction occurring in two major areas: institutional effectiveness and teaching/learning.

Quality Meets Assessment: Institutional Effectiveness

Examples of the intersection of quality and assessment as they relate to institutional effectiveness include the following:

- Program and department assessment plans, as well as Institutional Effectiveness plans, have been linked directly to the NDSCS mission statement.
- Throughout the years, NDSCS has conducted occasional surveys of students, faculty, administration, alumni, and employers. However, after the development of the Quality initiative, surveys and survey results have come to be seen as instruments of change. The use and analysis of the Student Satisfaction Survey, Quality Culture Survey, Institutional Priorities, alumni and student surveys have become the norm.
- Program assessment reports have direct links to budgeting and planning through "feedback" loops that incorporate timelines.

- As described above, fundamental changes have resulted, such as shifting the academic calendar (with Assessment Week and Assessment Days) to accommodate assessment planning.
- A unification of the campus around Quality and Assessment has led to more holistic thinking, resulting in joint divisional faculty meetings and joint divisional chair meetings, all of which were unheard of in the past.
- The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle is solidly built into the assessment cycle for reporting, budgeting, and planning.

Quality Meets Assessment: Teaching/Learning

NDSCS has seen a qualitative, but evolutionary, shift in its approach to teaching/learning largely due to Quality and Assessment initiatives, such as the following:

- Instructors have brought team approaches to classrooms, both in terms of student teams for collaborative learning projects and in terms of teacher teams, for example, team grading of portfolios.
- As assessment brought student learning issues to the fore, Quality initiatives helped departments employ team approaches to ordinary department planning and later to planning for learning and planning for assessment.
- The team approach has expanded from departmental to inter-departmental planning with increased collaboration among department chairs both in planning for learning and planning for assessment.

Finally, Quality and Assessment initiatives have created some interesting intersections between institutional effectiveness and program assessment. For example, retention was initially seen as primarily an administrative problem: the focus was giving students quality administrative services in areas such as registration, financial aid, and dining services. As Assessment developed and brought learning to the fore, it became clear that retention was also an academic issue: students needing academic services such as developmental training in mathematics and English skills may need a longer period of time to complete their program of study.

The Future of Quality and Assessment

As NDSCS moves into the next millennium, it faces several challenges, all of which will affect Quality and Assessment. As a state, North Dakota faces a declining population and hence declining college enrollments. The immediate impact of this decline will depend to some extent on the North Dakota Legislature and on the State Board of Higher Education. More immediately, NDSCS is facing administrative changes at the highest level, as it seeks a new President. This individual may or may not be familiar with a Quality and Assessment campus culture.

Another issue is maintenance: once the current NCA accreditation review is completed, how does the campus maintain momentum? How do we continue to orient new employees? How do we ensure that assessment remains meaningful and does not devolve into a "paper" requirement? How do we keep assessment from overwhelming the campus in a mass of data and thus losing the potential for Quality improvements?

Finally, it is apparent that Quality and Assessment initiatives have yet to reach their full potential at NDSCS. There remain employees who have not had Quality training and employees (sometimes the same group) who do not understand or appreciate Assessment initiatives. Additionally, we have yet to use assessment data to publicize the quality of our institution to the general public. Although the public and legislative demand for accountability is one of the major drivers for Quality and Assessment, we have yet to find a way to share our findings and our progress with the public. There is much to be done.

Gloria Dohman is Director of Assessment and Institutional Research at North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.

Harvey Link is Dean, Arts, Science, and Business Division, at North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.

Gary Henrickson is Chair of English and Humanities at North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.

Appendix

North Dakota State College of Science

When Quality Meets Assessment

Total Quality	Year	Assessment
	1988-89	Assessment Committee Formed
	1989	NCA 1st Call for Assessment
	1989-91	NDSCS Accreditation Self-Study
NDUS Total Quality Initiative; "Team Science"	1990-91	
	1991	NCA Team Visit and 10 year Accreditation
Acquaintanceship training; Appointment of Quality Coordinator	1991-92	
Acquaintanceship training for campus employees	1992-93	
Fox Valley Training; Curriculum Purchased; Campus training; Quality Council established Quality Standards; Director of Quality and Assessment	1993-94	NCA 2nd Call; Assessment Committee Redefined; Gen Ed & Entry Level Sub-committees established; Assessment Coordinator appointed; Gen Ed Plan drafted
Quality training continues; Quality Academy formed; Quality Standards; Performance Appraisal Process, Strategic Plan, Quality Reward and Recognition Program	1994-95	NCA approves Assessment Plan; Gen Ed and Entry Level become standing committees
Campus Governance Document; Quality Training and Other Activities Continue	1995-96	1st cycle of Program Assessment Plans
Quality Training and Other Activities Continue	1996-97	2nd cycle of Program Assessment Plans; 1st cycle of Assessment Reports; 1st Annual Report
Quality Training and Other Activities Continue	1997-98	3rd (last) cycle of Program Assessment Plans; 2nd cycle of Assessment Reports; 2nd Annual Report
Quality Training and Other Activities Continue	1998-99	1st and 2nd Assessment Weeks; NCA Staff Liaison Visit; Assessment Reports, 3rd Annual Report
Quality Training and Other Activities Continue	1999-00	3rd and 4th Assessment Weeks, NCA Self-Study based on Continuous Improvement

Incorporating the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Criteria into Your NCA Accreditation Process

Ronald A. Swanson
Helene Hedlund
Jerry L. Neff

In November of 1998, Northwest Technical College, located in northwestern Minnesota, initiated a faculty performance pilot with one of its five campuses. The pilot was centered around competencies essential to effective instruction. These competencies were identified using SCANS based competency profiling and assessment tools developed by AES International, a performance management-consulting firm. The pilot proved highly successful and was recommended by participating faculty for expansion to all five campuses. In March of 1999, Dr. Ronald Swanson was named as the president of Northwest Technical College. A proponent of the Baldrige National Quality Program, Dr. Swanson immediately identified the link between the AES competency assessment and the Baldrige criteria for excellence in education. The merger of these two processes has provided the foundation for the college's NCA assessment and evaluation model for administration, faculty, and staff.

A little history of the college may be helpful in framing the significance of this process. The Northwest Technical College, comprised of five campuses spread across nearly one fourth of the state of Minnesota, had been five independent technical colleges. In 1992 they were merged by state mandate. The process of unification has been difficult and challenging. In the twelve months prior to Dr. Swanson's arrival, the college had operated under the direction of three different presidents. Employee assessment and evaluation was a major area of concern for faculty still struggling with their own identity and with trust issues that emerged under previous administrations.

Dr. Swanson understood that the first challenge in both the NCA and the Baldrige continuous improvement processes would be setting standards against which to measure performance. The importance of individual campus autonomy must be balanced with the critical need for unity. The Malcom Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence provided one central focal point based on criteria that had been developed through a prestigious, nationally-acclaimed model. It was specific enough to provide direction, yet broad enough to support campus autonomy.

Setting standards does not necessarily ensure that all employees will meet those standards. The second challenge was to determine the skills and abilities necessary for college employees to effectively perform their jobs and contribute to the appropriate Baldrige criteria. Only after these pieces have been put into place can the college begin the process of assessing existing employees to determine their level of proficiency in the critical skills and abilities and selecting new employees who possess these critical skills and abilities.

Given the history of the college, Dr. Swanson needed to ensure employee ownership in (and support for) the process of identifying critical skills and abilities. Because the results of this process would be used for employee selection, he also had to ensure that the process would be compliant with the guidelines set forth by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) and the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). To accomplish these objectives, he selected the SCANS based, Commitment Builder Competency Profiling Process created by AES International. This process involves examining the skills required to perform a job from the perspective of the subject matter expert as well as that of the key stakeholders surrounding that position. Charts on the following page describes the stakeholder groups, their Baldrige primary focus, and the competency profiles required for each.

The following matrix describes the stakeholder groups as defined through joint efforts of the college cabinet, the faculty senate, the student senate, and the general advisory committee. It also identifies areas of primary focus for each stakeholder group:

Primary Focus Matrix **Baldrige Performance Criteria**	Administration/ Cabinet	Faculty Senate	Student Senate	Academic Deans	Faculty	Academic Affairs Support Staff	Student Services Support Staff	Maintenance Support Staff	General Advisory Committee
1. Leadership	X	X		X					
2. Strategic Planning	X	X							X
3. Student and stakeholder Focus			X		X	X	X	X	
4. Information and Analysis	X	X	X						
5. Faculty and staff Focus		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
6. Educational and support Process Management			X	X	X	X	X	X	
7. School Performance Results	X			X	X	X	X		

SCANS competencies required for individual stakeholder groups as determined through the AES Commitment Builder Competency Profiling Process:

Critical Competency Matrix for employee groups **SCANS Competencies**	Administration/ Cabinet	Faculty Senate	Student Senate	Academic Deans	Faculty Detroit Lakes Campus	Faculty Bemidji Campus	Faculty Moorhead Campus	Faculty Wadena Campus	Faculty East Grand Forks Campus
Scheduled/Completed	10/99	11/99	11/99	10/99	12/98	1/00	2/00	2/00	2/00
F5 Listening	5	5	5	5	5	5			
F6 Speaking					5	4			
F9 Problem Solving	5	5	5	5	5	5			
F10 Visualization	5								
F11 Ability to Learn					5	5			
F12 Reasoning		5							
F13 Responsibility	5	5	5		5				
F17 Honesty and Integrity	5	5	5	5	5	4			
C4 Manages Human Resources				5					
C5 Acquires Information					5				
C7 Interprets Information	5				5	4			
C10 Teaches Others					5	5			
C11 Serves Customers		5	5	5	5				
C12 Leadership	5	4		5					
C13 Negotiation		5			4				

Personnel from each campus who were trained in the AES Commitment Builder Competency Profiling Process worked with stakeholder groups on their campus to facilitate development of the SCANS competency profiles. This process served to engage stakeholders in setting standards for performance and promote communications regarding variations in perceptions among different stakeholder groups. These same facilitators engaged stakeholders on their campus in accepting or modifying the Key performance indicators for each Baldrige criterion upon which they would be assessed.

With these steps completed, performance indicators for Baldrige criteria and critical SCANS competencies had been set and data capture was ready to begin. Prior to evaluation of any individual employee, it was necessary to ensure that the "system" was "capable" of producing the results that were being assessed. To accomplish this, data were aggregated by stakeholder group rather than by individual employees within the group. The target for performance was 80%. After adjusting for standard deviation, data for the aggregate group with a variation greater than 10% suggest system instability. Where this condition existed it was necessary to review the source of variation and make appropriate changes until the system could be established as stable. Only then could individuals within the group be fairly assessed and evaluated.

Individual employees repeatedly expressed their appreciation for this process, explaining that these safeguards were essential to enlisting their support for evaluation. Through this process, individuals were involved in establishing the critical skills for their job, developing the performance indicators that would be used for assessment and then having their individual data protected until the system was proven to be capable of producing the desired results.

The process of stabilizing the system is dictated by the nature and source of variation in the data. Assessment data for instructional faculty on the Detroit Lakes campus in the "Student and Stakeholder" focus area are shown below as an example of "stable" data:

Baldrige Criterion–3.1.1 Student and Stakeholder Focus–Responds to students' needs

- Faculty participation–26 of 28
- Student participation–467 of 514
- Peer participation–24 of 28
- Administration participation–2 of 2

	Administrator	**Faculty (Self)**	**Peer**	**Student**
Responds to students' needs	**82.5%**	**81.0%**	**81.3%**	**90.1%**

The target for performance was 80%, representing consistent satisfactory performance. Data reveal that all stakeholder groups perceive faculty performance to be within 10 points of the target. This suggests that system stability is such that it is possible for faculty on the Detroit Lakes Campus to meet the performance expectations established for this outcome. Individual evaluation by these performance criteria is therefore fair and appropriate.

Assessment data for the NTC Cabinet in the Baldrige criterion of "Leadership" proved that there was instability in the system as evidenced below:

Baldrige Criterion–1.1.1 Establishing the leadership system–continuously improving the leadership system

- Academic Dean participation–5 of 5
- Student Senate participation–41 of 50
- Faculty participation–183 of 228
- Support staff participation–32 of 71
- Faculty Senate participation–10 of 10

	Academic Deans	**Student Senate**	**Faculty**	**Support Staff**	**Faculty Senate**
Continuously Improve the leadership system	**67.5%**	**61.04%**	**55.3%**	**43.75%**	**36.17%**

This example revealed data in excess of 10% below the "80%" target for all stakeholder groups with more than 30 points of variation among stakeholder groups. Before individuals could be evaluated on leadership, it was necessary to stabilize this system.

In order to stabilize the system, each stakeholder group was asked to provide a list of recommendations for improving each of the six performance indicators included in this assessment. These recommendations were tabulated then reviewed by the cabinet. A facilitated meeting comprised of the cabinet plus one representative of each stakeholder group established priorities from the many recommendations and the cabinet began to act upon these recommendations. Another round of assessment data later in the year will determine whether the system has been stabilized. If so, individual cabinet members can be evaluated for leadership. If not, additional system revision will be undertaken as determined by the data.

Once a set of assessment data established stability and individual performance was evaluated, performance indicators for critical competencies were included in the assessment along with those for the Baldrige criteria. These data served to provide guidelines for staff development initiatives. In some instances performance was improved just through the assessment process itself. In others, additional training or other resources were focused on improving performance.

By the writing of this document, there was considerable evidence that participating staff and faculty were finding this process to be non-threatening and constructive. They were able to see that it applied as equally to administration as it did to all other stakeholder groups and that the focus of the process was improvement, not disciplinary action. The cabinet led by example, capturing data about their own performance indicators and freely distributing it to all other stakeholder groups while asking for recommendations that would result in improvements.

The college will host their on-site NCA visits in the weeks following the writing of this paper. Results of that visit will be provided as a portion of this presentation at the April Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting:

Ronald A. Swanson .... ron.swanson@mail.ntc.mnscu.edu

Helene Hedlund .... heleneh@MAIL.NTC.MNSCU.EDU

Jerry Neff .... Jerryn@skillcommand.com

Ronald A. Swanson is President of Northwest Technical College in Perham, Minnesota.

Helene Hedlund is Faculty facilitator and Faculty Senate member at Northwest Technical College Detroit Lakes Campus.

Jerry L. Neff is President of AES International in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Articulation of the Baldrige Criteria to Meet the Self-Study Guidelines for NCA

Denis Roark

Introduction

Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell has been developing a growing interest in the quality movement for the past ten years. In 1997, ENMU-Roswell submitted an application for a state quality award based on the educational criteria developed by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Along with the application process, the administration at the Roswell Campus has provided training for its employees in the Baldrige core values.

As a result of this application, Quality New Mexico presented ENMU-Roswell with the Roadrunner award in the spring of 1998. ENMU-Roswell is one of only four educational institutions in New Mexico to have won this coveted honor.

Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell is now in the process of developing a self-study in preparation for an NCA on-site visit in the fall of 2001. With the work the Roswell Campus has already done on the Baldrige educational criteria, it seemed only logical to conduct the NCA self-study using the Baldrige framework. This direction seemed especially appropriate as the North Central Association was encouraging institutions to move toward the use of quality criteria through its Academic Quality Improvement Project.

In developing its self-study, the Roswell Campus felt it was important to not only demonstrate its leadership in the quality movement, but to link these efforts with the traditional NCA Criteria for Accreditation. To achieve this, the question became: How do the national Baldrige educational criteria interface with the traditional NCA Criteria for Accreditation? In response to this question, the Roswell Campus conducted a workshop refresher on the Baldrige criteria and then an intense one-day workshop on linking the Baldrige educational criteria with the NCA criteria. An external consultant in linking these two criteria conducted this workshop.

Following the training, a matrix showing the relationship was developed and shared with the self-study team. The self-study team also reorganized itself along the seven Baldrige education criteria and began the self-study process using these criteria as a frame of reference.

When the self-study process began in late 1998, there were serious questions about whether the Roswell Campus should conduct the self-study process along traditional lines or venture into the uncharted waters of using Baldrige as the frame of reference. In the past year, there has been a growing confidence that ENMU-Roswell could successfully develop the self-study using the Baldrige criteria. It is safe to say that this non-traditional approach has generated more enthusiasm and excitement as the campus looks forward to becoming a leader in implementing the Baldrige approach to the self-study process.

ENMU-Roswell would like to share what it has learned about using the Baldrige approach and linking these criteria to the traditional NCA standards with other institutions. It would be our hope that as a result of our presentation, other institutions would become more comfortable in considering this as they conduct their self-studies.

The Institution

Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell is a comprehensive, public supported community college founded in the fall of 1958. ENMU-Roswell serves Chaves County, the smaller communities along the Pecos River, and the town of Artesia, located thirty-five miles south of Roswell in Eddy County. The population served by ENMU-Roswell is approximately 80,000. Although the area served is considered rural, a variety of businesses and industries complement the rural environment.

ENMU-Roswell operates under the authority of the Eastern New Mexico University Board of Regents. The relationship is contractual between the Board of Regents and the Community College Board, which is made up of the four local school boards.

The Baldrige Framework

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program is built upon a set of eleven core values or concepts. These core values form the basis for evaluating institutional performance using seven criteria. To score well on the criteria, an institution must integrate the core values into its daily operation. These core values are:

- **Learning-centered education.** An institution places the focus on learning and the real needs of students.
- **Leadership.** An organization's leadership must set clear and visible directions and articulate high expectations.
- **Continuous improvement and organizational learning.** Achieving ever-higher levels of institutional performance requires a well-executed approach to continuous improvement and organizational learning.
- **Valuing faculty and staff.** The institution values the faculty and staff and provides opportunities for their continued professional growth.
- **Partnership development.** The Institution seeks to develop both internal and external partnerships.
- **Design quality and prevention.** A strong emphasis is placed upon designing programs and services that focus on quality and the prevention of system problems.
- **Management by fact.** An institution's decisions are guided by facts gathered through the analysis of information.
- **Long-range view of the future.** The future is planned for by the institution's ability to anticipate changes that are on the horizon and its willingness to make long-term commitments.
- **Public responsibility and citizenship.** The institution should be a model for public health, safety, environment, ethical business practices, non-discrimination, etc.
- **Fast response.** The time it takes an institution to respond to internal and external issues is critical to its success.
- **Results orientation.** The institution should focus on the results of its performance by establishing and monitoring indicators of success.

An institution measures its performance in relation to these core values through the seven Baldrige Educational Criteria. The seven criteria and their related items are:

1.0 Leadership	1.1 Leadership System 1.2 Public Responsibility
2.0 Strategic Planning	2.1 Strategy Development Process 2.2 Institutional Strategy

3.0 Student and Stakeholder Focus	3.1 Knowledge of Student Needs and Expectations 3.2 Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction and Relationship Enhancement
4.0 Information and Analysis	4.1 Selection and Use of Information and Data 4.2 Selection and Use of Comparative Information and Data 4.3 Analysis and Review of Institutional Performance
5.0 Faculty and Staff Focus	5.1 Work Systems 5.2 Faculty and Staff Education, Training, and Development 5.3 Faculty and Staff Well-Being and Satisfaction
6.0 Educational and Support Process Management	6.1 Education Design and Delivery 6.2 Education Support Processes
7.0 Institutional Performance Results	7.1 Student Performance Results 7.2 Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction Results 7.3 Faculty and Staff Results 7.4 Institution-Specific Results

These criteria and items (and related areas) are evaluated using a system of 1000 possible points. How an institution scores gives clear feedback about what areas the institution is performing well in relation to the criteria and what areas need the greatest improvement.

How the Baldrige and NCA Criteria Differ

The North Central Association lists five criteria as broad descriptors that an institution addresses during its self-study. In addressing these five criteria, an institution hopes to present a pattern of evidence that it is successful in meeting or maintaining NCA Criteria for Accreditation. Briefly stated, the five NCA criteria are:

Criterion One. The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

Criterion Two. The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

Criterion Three. The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

Criterion Four. The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Criterion Five. The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

In comparing the Baldrige and NCA criteria it seems clear that both sets of criteria seek evidence of a strong institution that is effectively meeting its goals as an organization. The differences are in the two approaches. The focus of the NCA criteria is measuring outcomes or what the institution has accomplished. Essentially, an institution seeking accreditation should clearly define it purposes and then demonstrate it is not only accomplishing, but will continue to accomplish, its purposes.

The focus of the Baldrige criteria is how an organization achieves its goals. Results are an important aspect of the Baldrige criteria, just as they are in the NCA criteria. However, for an institution to score well using the Baldrige criteria, it must also demonstrate a systems approach. For example, one of the Baldrige core values is that an institution places a strong emphasis upon designing programs and services that focus on quality and the prevention of system problems.

Since the two criteria have different approaches to evaluating institutional effectiveness, the question becomes: Can an institution conduct a self-study using the Baldrige criteria and still meet the requirements of the NCA criteria?

Linking the Baldrige and NCA Criteria

ENMU-Roswell has carefully studied both the Baldrige and NCA criteria and believes there is a strong linkage between the two systems. For example, the Baldrige core value of continuous improvement and organizational learning is reflected in NCA Criterion 4. A consultant working with the Roswell Campus has developed a matrix showing how each of the seven Baldrige criteria link to one or more of the NCA criteria. This matrix illustrates the strong linkage between the two systems. For example, Baldrige criterion 2.1 is linked to NCA Criterion 1, 2, and 4.

How the ENMU-Roswell Self-Study will Articulate the Linkage

ENMU-Roswell will use the Baldrige criteria as a framework for its NCA self-study. The first step in the process has been to provide training for all employees involved in the self-study process. The training will provide all self-study participants with the knowledge and background in both the Baldrige and NCA criteria and how these systems link to each other.

The next step has been to reorganize the self-study teams into ten subcommittees reflecting the Baldrige criteria. These subcommittees will then obtain information and assess their areas of responsibility using the Baldrige scoring criteria. This will provide the Roswell Campus with a scorecard showing strengths and areas of concern. The results of this process will be a published self-study that gives insight and direction for continuous improvement.

Denis Roark is Dean of Instruction at Eastern New Mexico University in Roswell.

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 3

Quest for Quality: Mission and Planning

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Mission Restatement via Heritage Rediscovery: A Case Study

James D. Evans

Most institutions of higher education periodically review and revise their mission statements, with the primary goal of modernizing the school's philosophy to make it more "relevant" to current times. Lindenwood University used a different approach to renewing its mission statement: We took a serious look at our historical and philosophical roots and then accentuated those parts of our present service that best represent the expression of our institutional heritage. In the midst of this creative process, we discovered several important principles, including:

- that the founders of a university create an institutional theme that can transcend specific groups that occupy the institution at different times;
- that a university can become more successful by moving back toward the basic theme that led to its founding;
- conversely, that a university might begin to flounder when it loses track of its origins and strays in other directions;
- that a university should periodically explore its heritage and develop adaptive ways to express its fundamental purpose within an ever-changing higher education landscape.

Lindenwood is the fastest growing university in Missouri, having increased its student body by a factor of ten in just ten years. It is also the second oldest institution of higher education west of the Mississippi. I will document how we started to veer from our historical theme during the 1970s and 1980s, how we began to rediscover our heritage about a decade ago, and how we have more consciously sought to honor our traditional identity through a reaffirmation of our original mission. I will also convey how a deliberate return to our roots has played a significant role in our recent prosperity.

A Brief History of the Institution

Pioneer woman Mary Sibley founded Lindenwood University in 1827 in the frontier town of Saint Charles, Missouri—near the point along the Missouri River where Lewis and Clark embarked on their trailblazing expedition to the Pacific Northwest. The "Lindenwood Female College" began as a finishing school for young women from well-to-do families, but from its inception was committed to combining professional issues with academic pursuits, the social with the intellectual, and the spiritual with the physical. In short, Mary Sibley brought holistic higher education to the American frontier. Two other major characteristics were to become defining features of this residential liberal arts school through the next century and a half: 1) an unwavering focus on the educational needs of each individual and 2) an emphasis on character development in the context of Judeo-Christian values. Mrs. Sibley stated that Lindenwood's basic mission is to produce "...enlightened, accomplished, and useful members of society." (St. Charles County Court, 1856). Lindenwood graduates would have not only intellectual prowess but also spiritual purpose, practical skills, and a strong sense of social responsibility (see Coker, 1997).

Lindenwood became a Presbyterian college in 1853, a four-year college in 1918, and a comprehensive university in 1997. Historical reviews and summaries of its development indicate that the University held to its original purpose, customs, and ideals through the mid-1960s. Up to that point, through varying times and fortunes, it had experienced gradual overall growth in its student body, and its programs and finances had stabilized in a healthy condition. Like so many private postsecondary schools, however, Lindenwood began to feel the impact of the economic pressures and rapid cultural changes that marked the '60s and '70s. In 1969, it attempted to strengthen its financial base by becoming a coeducational institution. That fundamental change was associated with a relaxing of some of the social rules and a gradual shift away from traditional religious ideals and American-frontier values. By the mid-1970s the school's historically important focus on combining character development with intellectual growth was displaced somewhat by a lopsided emphasis on academic development–a trend that also tended to discount the importance of community service and work experience.

In 1975, the school altered its basic character even further. Now doing business under the name of The Lindenwood Colleges, it had become a federation of four rather disjointed enterprises: The Lindenwood College for Women, The Lindenwood College for Men, The Lindenwood Evening College, and The Lindenwood College for Individualized Education. Graduate programs also had been added to the mix. That the institution was grappling with an identity crisis is evident in this excerpt from one of its mission statements in that era:

> The Colleges offer a wide range of undergraduate majors, both in the disciplines of the liberal arts and sciences and in career-oriented areas. Its distinctive and flexible educational programs, offered in both traditional and innovative formats, are designed to meet the individual needs of a diverse student body, which includes both traditional and nontraditional college-age students. The Colleges also offer a number of graduate programs, which are intended to meet the needs of working adults in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

During the '70s and '80s, the school suffered annual operating deficits and accumulated substantial indebtedness over the same period. It had lost sight of its historical mission, and, with that, its market appeal diminished. The market was still "out there," but Lindenwood had drifted away from the institutional characteristics that would best serve that population. In the spring of 1989, the number of students had dropped below 1,000, the financial situation was dire, and there was no well defined sense of purpose and direction. In view of the school's seemingly inexorable decline, the board of directors considered closing the doors permanently.

You *Can* Go Home

Instead of shutting down one of America's oldest institutions of higher education, Lindenwood's board made a courageous decision to "refound" the school. This involved three major actions. First, the board recruited an experienced president, and directed him to transform the university into a carefully managed institution. Second, it worked with the president and key members of the university community to rebuild the mission in a way that would bring Lindenwood back to its historical purpose and objectives. Third, the university community committed itself to implementing the rebuilt mission throughout all academic programs and in the day-to-day operations of the campus.

These actions launched a new era for Lindenwood that was based on a return to the fundamental precepts that had given rise to the original frontier university: individualized, holistic, values-oriented higher education that combines the practical with the academic. Several significant changes and initiatives followed adoption of the revised mission: dormitory visitation rules were re-established and enforced; a code of conduct was developed and communicated to the students, faculty, and staff; programs aimed at developing a strong work ethic were put in place; the ideal of community service was made a prevailing expectation; a number of co-curricular opportunities and student organizations were added; a serious, individualized advising system was implemented; and the general education curriculum was strengthened to merge a traditional "liberating arts" form of higher education with career preparation. The revised mission was formally expressed in the 1994 version of Lindenwood's mission statement, which is displayed below.

Recognizing the unique possibilities presented by the university's rich frontier heritage, in 1998 Lindenwood acquired the historic homestead built and operated by Daniel Boone, his son, Nathan, and their families in a rural area of Missouri near the university. The "Boone Campus" is the headquarters of Lindenwood's Center for the Study of American Culture and Values, which will offer programs in American Studies and Environmental Studies.

When linked with tighter overall management of the institution and aggressive recruiting and public relations campaigns, these changes resulted in a period of prosperity that was unprecedented in the university's storied history. By the 1998-99 academic year, the unduplicated student count approached 9,500, the full-time faculty had grown from fewer than 50 professors to more than 140, and the school had experienced nine consecutive years of balanced budgets and increasing revenues.

The 1994 Revision of Lindenwood's Mission Statement

Lindenwood College is an independent, liberal arts college with an historical relationship with the Presbyterian Church. Its programs are value-centered and intend to create a genuine community of learning, uniting all involved in a common enterprise.

Lindenwood College seeks to offer undergraduate and graduate programs of high quality that will:

- provide educational experiences that will unite the liberal arts with professional and pre-professional studies in an atmosphere of academic freedom distinguished by personal attention of faculty to students;
- foster awareness of social issues, environmental problems, political processes, community service, and those values and ethical ideas inherent in the Judeo-Christian tradition and other major world cultures: belief in an ordered, purposeful universe; belief in the dignity of work; belief in the worth and integrity of the individual; belief in the obligations and privileges of citizenship; belief in the value of unrestricted search for truth;
- encourage a pursuit of knowledge and understanding through the rigorous study of a core curriculum of general education and an area of major emphasis, creating the foundation for life-long learning that will provide graduates with the tools and flexibility necessary to cope with future needs and changes; and
- build a deliberately diverse learning community structured around a residential population joined by commuter students of all ages, graduate and undergraduate, in St. Charles and other sites, a community without economic barriers limiting access, in which students with different goals may join together in intellectual, social, spiritual, creative, and physical activities.

Lindenwood College's educational programs liberate individuals from limitations, enabling them to pursue rewarding and fulfilling lives.

Mary Sibley also had run a tightly managed school with a resourceful spirit and the same clear purpose. She would have been proud of today's Lindenwood.

The 1999 Mission Restatement

Since Lindenwood reviews—and, if necessary, revises—its mission about every five years, we undertook a new mission-restatement process late in 1998, with the goal of adopting the new document in 1999. We had rediscovered our basic identity and spiritual heritage in the early 1990s, but our institutional self-concept became even more distinct as we proceeded into the later years of that decade. Consequently, we felt a need to restate our mission with even clearer conviction than we had in 1994. The remainder of this paper will describe the issues and procedural steps involved in what we call the "Heritage-rediscovery Approach" to mission restatement. The entire process, from the initial meeting through submission of a final draft to the board of directors, required less than two months.

☐ Who Shall Serve?

The group charged with examining and recommending a revision of the mission was a standing committee of the Lindenwood University Board of Directors—specifically, the Mission and Purpose Committee. The committee consisted of six members of the board and the university president. Three of the board members were appointed specifically because they were also middle-aged Lindenwood alumni, and they would bring historical perspective to the deliberations. The president was considered an essential participant because he would contribute vision to the committee's work. Two senior faculty members were also asked to serve, in *ex officio* capacity, to provide input on the present-day nature and direction of the academic programs. The main principle determining the composition of the committee was that all participants had to have an abiding commitment to the future of the university and its students. Each committee member also had to bring a unique perspective to the team, and the various perspectives had to be complementary in their coverage of issues central to mission formulation.

☐ Meeting #1: Initial Considerations and Planning (early November, 1998)

The following items were brought to the table at the first meeting.

◇ **According to North Central Association guidelines, what criteria must a mission statement satisfy?** Chapter 3, "The General Institutional Requirements," of NCA's *Handbook of Accreditation* (1997, 19) specifies that a mission statement should define "the basic character of an institution, including"

- ○ a brief description of its main educational program(s) "and their purposes"
- ○ the populations of students served
- ○ the geographical area served by the institution
- ○ a description of "how the institution fits within the broader higher education community"

◇ **What timeline should be followed?** The time line for revising the mission was left open, with the provision that the submission draft should be ready for the board of directors' February 1999 meeting, which was approximately three months away. The committee would meet about every two weeks until the submission draft was complete. (As it turned out, four 60-90 minute meetings were all that was necessary to complete the task.)

◇ **What questions or issues should be considered in developing the mission restatement?** We identified several preliminary items to be discussed. For example,

- ○ the university's relationship to the Presbyterian Church
- ○ the right to have values-based programs
- ○ the role of the history and philosophy of our past

Additional questions included: What kind of school are we? What do we have in common with other kinds of institutions of higher education, and what parts of their mission statements have relevance for us?

The next step: A copy of Lindenwood's 1856 Deed Restrictions, which contained the university's first mission statement, was distributed to each committee member for study. Also, mission statements from a variety of other institutions, both local and distant, were handed out with the understanding that these would be discussed at the next meeting. *All these mission statements were available on the Internet.*

☐ Meeting #2: Review of the Present Mission Statement

After reviewing a dozen college and university mission statements and conducting an item-by-item analysis of Lindenwood's present statement, the committee made the following determinations:

◇ **Small is beautiful.** The clearest, most informative mission statements were those that were most concise and pithy. We agreed with the viewpoint of BizPlanIt.Com (1998): "The mission and vision statements set the tone for not only your business plan, but also for your company.... Economy of words is critical. This doesn't necessarily mean that they should be short at the expense of effectiveness, but that each word should be powerful and meaningful. Be clear and concise...." We found that our present mission statement was too wordy. It attempted to do more than it could, and, consequently, was less effective and informative than it should be. *A major part of our restatement task would be to produce a more succinct and cogent document.*

◇ **There were some basic source documents from which we would work to revise our mission statement.** We selected documents that would represent Lindenwood's past, present, and future directions, respectively. These documents included:

- ○ Lindenwood's 1856 Deed Restrictions [and mission] document, to revisit the original guiding principles of The Lindenwood Female College
- ○ Lindenwood's present mission statement, to give us a summary of what areas of service we had been considering important

- ○ A recently printed educational-philosophy document, titled *The Liberating Arts at Lindenwood University* (1997), which summarized the relationship of Lindenwood's present-day system of higher education to Judeo-Christian ideals and American-frontier values
- ○ The recently published vision statement of Lindenwood's president, which conveyed the university's likely future direction

Another generally excellent reference to help guide the mission-restatement process is *Organizational Vision, Values and Mission* (Crisp Publications, Inc., 1994), by Scott, Jaffe, and Tobe.

The next step: The committee chairperson issued these assignments to be completed prior to the next meeting: 1) each committee participant would study the source documents that had been selected; 2) on the basis of those documents, each participant would prepare a proposed mission statement of 25 or fewer words—a short paragraph that expresses the most essential purpose of the university. *Nota bene: This last assignment was the key to stimulating the level of thinking necessary to successfully complete the process of mission restatement.*

☐ Meeting #3: Development of a Working Draft

The task of trying to arrive at the most essential elements of Lindenwood's mission induced the following cognitive operations in the committee members:

- ◇ Comprehension. A mission statement, *per se*, should convey a very broad philosophy and purpose (à la BizPlanIt, 1998), not a hodgepodge of desiderata and their implications.
- ◇ Analysis. Some recurring terms found in the participants' drafts of a brief mission statement represent important connotations and ramifications of the university's mission. Some of the significant concepts expressed in those drafts included Values Orientation, Merger of Liberal Arts with Professional Studies, Productive/Responsible Citizens, Judeo-Christian Tradition, Holistic Education, Liberal Arts, Individual Attention, Search for Truth, and Lifelong Learning.
- ◇ More analysis. A statement of mission and purpose should include three parts:
  1. a brief statement of our essential mission
  2. a statement of what we are committed to (i.e., the ways we *express and realize* our mission)
  3. a brief statement of who we are (institutional self-identity), including mention of our historical roots
- ◇ Synthesis. The committee chose a succinct mission statement that condensed Lindenwood's various mission concepts into an essential philosophy:

> Lindenwood University offers values-centered programs leading to the development of the whole person—an educated, responsible citizen of a global community.

To this core credo, the committee members added a few *specifications of the mission statement,* which "define broad categories of action which the organization should take to realize its mission" (Saint Louis University, 1998),

> [statement of our purpose and commitment *(specifications* of how we carry out our mission)]
>
> Lindenwood is committed to providing educational experiences that
>
> - ○ combine professional and pre-professional programs with the liberal arts;
> - ○ focus on the talents, interests, and future of the individual student;
> - ○ promote diversity and an international perspective;
> - ○ support academic freedom and the unrestricted search for truth.
> - ○ [to be added to]

and a partial statement of "who we are" (institutional self-identity):

> [brief description of who we are, including mention of our historical roots]
>
> Lindenwood is an independent, liberal arts university that has an historical relationship with the Presbyterian Church and is firmly rooted in Judeo-Christian values....

With the creation of this working document, the basic structure of the mission statement was in hand.

The next step: One more meeting was needed to complete the "specifications" and "institutional identity" parts of the mission statement. The chairperson directed the group to focus on what was still needed to finalize those items.

☐ **Meeting #4: Completion of the Submission Draft**

Within the first half-hour of the final meeting, the committee members came together on this restatement of Lindenwood's mission, which was recommended to the full board of directors for adoption.

Lindenwood's 1999 Mission Statement

Lindenwood University offers values-centered programs leading to the development of the whole person—an educated, responsible citizen of a global community.

Lindenwood is committed to

- providing an integrative liberal arts curriculum,
- offering professional and pre-professional degree programs,
- focusing on the talents, interests, and future of the student,
- supporting academic freedom and the unrestricted search for truth,
- affording cultural enrichment to the surrounding community,
- promoting ethical lifestyles,
- developing adaptive thinking and problem-solving skills,
- furthering lifelong learning.

Lindenwood is an independent, liberal arts university that has an historical relationship with the Presbyterian Church and is firmly rooted in Judeo-Christian values. These values include belief in an ordered, purposeful universe, the dignity of work, the worth and integrity of the individual, the obligations and privileges of citizenship, and the primacy of the truth.

Conclusion

Periodic revision of a university's mission statement is just good institutional procedure. But mission review and restatement becomes absolutely necessary when the shifting currents of cultural change separate the university from its essential spirit, as represented by its historical values and behavior patterns. In some regions, a school that becomes detached from its roots can lose the population of students that has been its reason for existing. A "Heritage-rediscovery Approach" to mission restatement expressly identifies the essential purpose of the university's past service, and can bring about a renewed commitment to that purpose in a present-day form.

References

BizPlanIt.Com. 1998. Mission/Vision: Business Plan Basics. Http://www.bizplanit.com.

Coker, K. M. 1997. *Mary Sibley: Remember these things.* St. Charles, Mo.: Lindenwood University Library.

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA/CIHE). 1997. *Handbook of accreditation.* 2d ed. Chicago: NCA/CIHE.

St. Louis University. 1998. Mission Statement. Http://www.slu.edu/mission/shtml.

St. Charles County Court. 1856. Certified Copy of Deed to Lindenwood College. St. Charles, Mo.

James D. Evans is Dean of Faculty at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri.

Institutional Mission and Strategic Plan: Map and Territory

William A. Vensel
Andy Keogh

The Mission Statement—The Landscape

Ohio Dominican College (ODC) is a Catholic four-year coeducational liberal arts college offering the full range of traditional major programs. Founded as a women's college, St. Mary of the Springs, in 1911, it has grown and changed considerably over the years. In 1964 the college became coeducational, and in 1968 changed its name to Ohio Dominican College. As enrollment has grown, as new programs have been developed, the college has remained true to its identity as a Catholic college in the Dominican tradition, living out the Dominican motto: "to contemplate truth and to share the fruits of that contemplation."

For the last twenty five years, the college has been guided by a mission statement published in full in most official college documents. A close reading of the statement reveals that the mission and purposes of the institution are woven together inseparably in this single document. Much has changed at Ohio Dominican College over the last twenty-five years, but one constant has been the college's adherence to the purposes described in this mission statement:

> As a Catholic liberal arts college with a Dominican tradition, Ohio Dominican College is guided in its educational mission by the Dominican motto: to contemplate truth and to share with others the fruits of this contemplation. Truth is the basis of human freedom and the source of human effectiveness. Truth is dynamic, an infinite realm in which the person grows throughout life to the fullness of his or her humanity through progressive realization of the significance of old truths and progressive attainment of new truths. Truth can be found in all cultures and traditions, in the whole range of the arts and sciences, and, in a special way, in religious faith and theological reflection on faith.
>
> Ohio Dominican welcomes to its student body sincere seekers of truth whatever their age, sex, race, religious background, or ethnic and cultural heritage. All whose aspirations, maturity, and preparation draw them to pursuing a liberating education mutually enrich one another in the quest for truth in this small community of students, faculty, and staff, through curriculum, supporting services, and informal learning opportunities carried out in a climate of respect and freedom.
>
> Ohio Dominican's primary mission is to provide undergraduate and continuing education programs for the intellectual development, the growth in truth, of each student. In keeping with the Dominican tradition, educational experiences should be grounded in the liberal arts, foster the development of spiritual, aesthetic, and ethical values, promote physical and mental health, and provide for the development and responsible use of human skills and talents in professional and social service.
>
> Since the quest for truth is a lifelong activity, Ohio Dominican is committed to lifelong learning. Faculty, staff, and students practice this through research, creative activities, community involvement, and professional service. The College also offers non-credit programs and activities on and off campus to further the lifelong education of the Columbus civic and religious communities.
>
> Immersed in the technical progress, new human insights, and searching questions of the twenty-first century, Ohio Dominican College looks forward to helping individuals and society continue the search for truth in the expanding horizons of an unknown future.

The richness of this statement has provided inspiration and guidance to students, faculty, administrators, and board members since it was first approved by the Board in 1976 and reaffirmed in 1986. All major decisions of the college are made with reference to the mission statement. This mission statement not only provides inspiration and guidance, but to great degree defines the institutional identity. What is Ohio Dominican College? The mission statement tells you. The team report of the college's 1997 accreditation visit noted,

> ...the mission statement...is used consistently as a reference point in various planning activities beginning at the board level and including the assessment program and strategic planning processes for the past several years.

In fact, the mission statement was cited as one of the institutional strengths:

> The employees of the institution–faculty, administrators, and staff–have an extraordinary commitment to the mission of Ohio Dominican College, as evidenced in their student centered focus and their consistent use of the mission statement as an evaluative measure for decisions.

If the mission statement describes the identity of the institution and metaphorically describes the landscape, the strategic plan then becomes the roadmap for institutional change.

Planning Process—The Map

Since the mid-1980s, the college's Planning Council has led the development of a succession of five-year plans, which have formed the framework for accomplishing the college's primary goals over each five year period. The Planning Council, composed of the President, the four Vice-Presidents, other administrators, elected faculty and students, provides opportunities for all members of the campus community to contribute to the development process.

The development of the Plan for 2005 is in process at this time. Planning Council is following the same basic pattern of development as has been used in the last two cycles. In the Fall of 1999 the Planning Council established four Task Forces; Program Development, Resource Development, Urban Connections, and Enrollment Mix/Financial Sustainability. These groups include Planning Council members as well as other appropriate members of the campus community. Each group has been charged within its sphere of interest to develop a vision of Ohio Dominican College in the twenty-first century. This vision would balance the mission of the college against contemporary trends in education, and might include academic programming initiatives, internal organizational issues, recruitment and financial issues, anything that would be consistent with our mission, tradition, and resourcing abilities.

When the Task Forces completed their work, the entire campus community was invited to participate in the process. In the late Fall of 1999 participants met in "think-pair-share" groups to reflect upon the mission statement in light of today's educational environment and to reflect on the recommendations of the Task Forces. More than 250 students, faculty, and staff were involved in this participative planning process. The Board of Trustees also participated in the "think-pair-share" process at their November 1999 meeting. All interested parties have had input to the planning process, and the priorities and recommendations of these groups have been reported back to the Planning Council.

At this writing the Planning Council has heard the voice of the community regarding today's understanding of the institutional mission, the educational environment, and a prioritization of initiatives consistent with the mission that will guide the college as it moves forward into the next five years. The strategic plan for the next 5 years is being drafted at this time, and the Board of Trustees will approve and publish the final document later this year.

The Planning Process and the *Strategic Priorities for 2000*

Strategic Priorities for 2000 was developed during the 1994-95 academic year using a process identical to that described above. A central component of this development was the "think-pair-share" group process. One hundred and fifty-five students and seventy-two full and part-time faculty and staff, in several small group sessions, were asked to reflect on the mission statement and to identify phrases or sentences that seemed most critical for the college at this time in its history. In the spring of 1995, the following quotes from the mission statement emerged as the highest priorities:

- ○ Since the quest for truth is a lifelong activity, Ohio Dominican is committed to life-long learning.

- Ohio Dominican's primary mission is to provide undergraduate and continuing education programs for the intellectual development, the growth in truth of each student.
- Immersed in the technical progress, new human insights, and searching questions of the approaching twenty-first century, Ohio Dominican College looks forward to helping individuals and society continue the search for truth in the expanding horizons of an unknown future.
- As a Catholic liberal arts college with a Dominican tradition, Ohio Dominican College is guided in its educational mission by the Dominican motto: to contemplate truth and to share with others the fruits of this contemplation.
- Ohio Dominican welcomes to its student body sincere seekers of truth whatever their age, sex, race, religious background, or ethnic and cultural heritage.

The *Strategic Priorities for 2000* reflects these findings in its action plans for faculty development, technology initiatives, course scheduling alternatives, development of collaborative learning communities, recruitment and retention goals, and the provision of the financial and physical resources required to accomplish the mission.

Progress in the accomplishment of these goals is monitored by the Office of Institutional Research, and as this plan comes to a close, the college is proud that each of the major initiatives has been accomplished.

Outcomes from the Strategic Priorities for 2000

Strategic Priorities for 2000 was built on a vision the college called the *Invitation to Tomorrow*. ITT, as it was called, consisted of three key components:

1) To radically transform teaching and learning in light of:
    - What students will need to know and be able to do in the 21st century
    - Contemporary developments in learning theory and cognitive psychology
    - Modern information technologies
2) To remove time and space constraints to learning
3) To build collaborative skills for learning and service.

Several initiatives sprang from this vision. One key decision flowing from this vision was to place the initial focus of technology development on the teaching and learning interaction, making faculty development the first priority as the college moved into the technological age. The college decided to invest heavily in encouraging faculty to explore current thinking in learning theory and to explore the potentials of technology in their classrooms. Workshops and training sessions were held, individual coaching was offered, and other resources and manuals were provided. Summer institutes with stipends for faculty encouraged the exploration of contemporary learning theory and new teaching and learning techniques. Long before computers were provided to all faculty, each faculty member had several opportunities to experiment, and many did. When the infrastructure matured, a large number of faculty made a smooth and educationally profitable move to technology. Students were the beneficiaries of this approach to technology development.

A second decision taken as a result of the strategic plan was to create the Learning Enhanced Adult Degree (LEAD) program, a non-term, cohort based program in which students take a preprogrammed sequence of courses, one course at a time in an accelerated fashion. This program is built on a foundation of collaborative learning. Students meet weekly in class, but also meet weekly with a study group. Each course in the sequence includes group activities and requires students to work collaboratively, modeling the changing nature of the work environment. The LEAD program serves a body of students that the college had not reached before. While adult learning has always been part of the college tradition, and the Weekend College was strongly enrolled, the college found a need in the community for the accelerated format. Many students are willing to sacrifice private time in the short run to earn a degree that will pay off for them sooner. They enroll in the equivalent of a full time load while continuing to work a full time job.

Both of these initiatives are mentioned specifically in the *Strategic Priorities for 2000*, and both initiatives help fulfill the mission of the college. One can see that these initiatives are entirely consistent with the five highest priority quotes from the mission that emerged from the planning process in 1994-95. These two programs clearly reflect the college commitment to life-long learning, immersion in the new technologies, and service to all seekers of truth.

In fact these initiatives are consistent with the Dominican tradition. Once Saint Dominic established a body of followers, he sent them to study, teach, and preach in all of the major academic centers of Europe. Dominic believed that study and contemplation were inadequate responses to the needs of the faithful in understanding truth. Understanding truth demanded the sharing of the fruits of study and contemplation. As a consequence there developed a long tradition of itinerancy for the followers of Dominic. In a contemporary context the charism of itinerancy can be expressed by taking the truth of academic programs to the students by a variety of means, from distance learning programs to off-site centers.

Specific to the *Strategic Priorities for 2000* both the initiatives in technology and a cohort based program are direct responses to the Dominican understanding that study and contemplation require a sharing of that study and contemplation. In the first case technology could eliminate barriers of time and space for teaching and learning. In the second case the cohort based accelerated program provided a mechanism to share the fruits of study and contemplation with a body of students that could not be served by traditional programs. Both cases demonstrate the focus of Ohio Dominican College of the Dominican spirit and traditions expressed in the college Mission Statement.

Plan for 2005

While the strategic plan for 2005 is still in process at this writing, four themes have emerged so far from the planning process that will characterize the next planning cycle:

◊ **Relevancy.** Each of the four Task Groups submitted recommendations emphasizing the importance of keeping Ohio Dominican's programs and student experiences relevant to the needs of the students and responsive to the ever-changing marketplace. There is great interest in academic and student activity program reviews; internship and other job preparatory program development; and increased connection with the city of Columbus and its wide range of social, educational and cultural activities.

◊ **Urgency.** Participants want to see the investments that have been made during the last five years provide measurable results in areas such as enrollment, improved service quality, expanded outreach programs, and in an improving institutional identity for the College. Especially important was the need to continue to gain benefits from our investments in technology and people trained in its use and to move our technological capability to "the next level" quickly. Noteworthy in the groups were the discussions concerning the planned phase-in of laptop computers for all of our students and the opportunities afforded by our investments in Invitation to Tomorrow technology.

◊ **Accountability.** A dominant theme was that of maintaining our accountability as an institution to the mission and values that have been our beacon since the inception of the College. The attributes of Catholic, Dominican, and liberal arts with a commitment to traditional-aged students were confirmed. Continued expansion of our social outreach presence in the community and continued emphasis on the core importance of the liberal arts in the shaping and development of traditional-aged students received widespread support.

◊ **Quality.** A great deal of institutional pride was expressed in the across-the-board gains and increases in quality that have taken place over the last five years, Appropriately, there emerged a desire among many to maintain our "momentum" in increasing quality as a crucial element in improving the support of our programs across our many constituencies. Maintaining quality control over our expanding professional (and perhaps graduate) programs, maintaining a resource and staffing base consistent with our growth, and continuing our success in College endowment and other advancement programs are seen as important steps in strengthening the real and perceived development of Ohio Dominican College as an affordable, high quality experience for its constituencies.

While the Board of Trustees has not yet determined specific initiatives, the thematic discussion above suggests several directions for the future. Action items designed to take our programs out where they are needed are consistent with the theme of relevancy. Perhaps developing off-campus programming would be in the spirit of the Dominican charism of itinerancy, and as such very consistent with the college mission, which states in part that the college offer "...programs and activities on and off-campus." Perhaps in order to fully prepare its students for a full professional life, the college should develop graduate level programming in selected fields. Perhaps this is becoming aware of new realities, new truths about the contemporary environment, certainly consistent with the Dominican tradition. Many other initiatives are suggested in the discussion above, and many may become concrete when the Board issues the Plan for 2005.

Conclusion

If there is a single document that captures the spirit of Ohio Dominican College, it surely must be the Mission Statement. While the strategic plans have shown the way into the future, become the roadmaps pointing out new directions and destinations, each of the roads taken is part of the landscape of the mission of the college. As the college moves forward into the future, it is grounded in the Mission Statement. The mission keeps the entire ODC community focused on its primary values and its reason for existence, and when these primary values are juxtaposed with contemporary educational trends, changing educational environments, changing student body demographics, or changing societal factors, the Mission Statement inspires the ODC community to find unique solutions to these contemporary problems and opportunities.

William A. Vensel is Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at Ohio Dominican College in Columbus.

Andy Keogh is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Ohio Dominican College in Columbus.

General Education Reform and the Continuous Pursuit of Quality Learning

John A. Halpin

Boyer and Levine have contended that the purpose of general education is to "reaffirm the connectedness among all people" (see Levine, 1990, p. 51). An important implication of this conclusion is that it is the curricular and co-curricular components of an institution's general education program that represent the heart of the experiences it offers and the transformations it effects in its students. An institution's pursuit of excellence in student learning must therefore begin with, and always return to, evaluation and improvement of its general education program. The present paper represents a progress report on one institution's quest for quality through comprehensive reform of its general education curriculum. The challenges we have faced and the benefits we have derived from the process thus far are also discussed.

Institutional Mission as an Impetus

Eureka College is a liberal arts college affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are located in a rural setting and have an enrollment of approximately 500 students. Following an institutional self-study process four years ago, our president initiated an extensive effort to capture the educational identity of Eureka College and to establish a realizable vision for its next decade. The findings of five task forces (Vision, Teamwork, Communication, Marketing, and Planning) were compiled by an Implementation Task Force, which in turn, called for the immediate formation of a standing Strategic Planning Team. Once in place, the Planning Team spent much of its first year crafting a new mission statement for the college, the final draft of which is presented below:

> Eureka College, a liberal arts and science institution, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), exists to cultivate excellence in learning, service, and leadership. The College fosters the mutual development of intellect and character so that members of our community may lead meaningful, productive lives and succeed in their professional and social roles.

Together with the results of an institutional SWOT analysis, the mission statement was then used by the Planning Team as the springboard for developing a college-wide strategic plan, a working document that initially comprised 16 goals and their associated objectives and strategies. By the summer of 1999, however, it became increasingly clear that among the least developed goals in our plan were those addressing our most mission-specific concerns: character, service, and leadership. Very few of the objectives and strategies linked to these goals, moreover, pertained to improvements in our general education offerings. In this same summer we hired a new academic dean (now Dean of the College) who likewise discovered that Eureka College had not undergone a thorough analysis and revision of its general education program in 25 years. Accordingly, so that we might offer an education true to our mission and innovative for our times, our dean announced at the Fall Faculty Retreat in August that his top academic priority for the coming year would be the inauguration of a comprehensive reform of the Eureka College general education curriculum.

Launch of a Comprehensive Reform Project

Immediately following his announcement at the retreat, our dean surveyed the faculty regarding their interest in working on the project and received offers of service from 41 members (out of a full-time faculty of 47)! He then utilized these responses to assemble a Curricular Reform Steering Committee, the membership of which currently comprises: the Dean of the College, two faculty co-chairs and five other faculty members (across which are represented all academic divisions of the college), a member of the student body, a representative from the Admissions staff, and a colleague from the local high school. Since the end of October, the committee has been meeting either weekly or biweekly for a total of about five hours per month. What follows are some of the issues and concerns that up to this time (January 2000) have constituted our agenda.

- ◇ **Sub-Committees.** One of our first items of business was to form curricular sub-committees that could address some of our most pressing needs and that would report directly to the Steering Committee. We accordingly created three initial sub-committees: *Research,* whose charge is to gather scholarly materials on general education and curricular reform, identify programs that are noteworthy for their integrity and success, and investigate methods by which other institutions have embedded assessment practices throughout the curriculum; *Character,* whose charge is to develop strategies to ensure that our proposed curriculum, in whatever form it ultimately takes, responds to the challenges presented by our mission statement with respect to character, service, and leadership; and *Grants,* whose charge is to explore funding sources that would provide the support necessary to enable our faculty to take curricular risks.

- ◇ **Trends.** As a means of informing our preliminary deliberations, the Steering Committee spent a good deal of time discussing the directions that other institutions of higher learning increasingly have been pursuing as they seek to improve the quality of student learning. Among the trends that seemed especially germane given our needs are: a shift from instructor-centered to learner-centered educational attitudes and practices (e.g., Barr & Tagg, 1995); the cultivation of new literacies (e.g., environmental, technological) required of today's citizens and employees (Subbiondo, 1994); the integration of knowledge across disciplines in ways that highlight the interconnectedness of humans and their endeavors (e.g., AAC, 1994); and the broadening of cultural awareness and appreciation through opportunities in international education (e.g., Hersh, 1997).

- ◇ **Caveats.** With the aid of materials gathered by our Research Sub-Committee, the Steering Committee likewise spent much of its early meetings identifying the assumptions and approaches that have threatened the success of past reform efforts. A few of the more challenging issues acknowledged by the committee include: Gaff's (1980) "potholes" pertaining to the expectation that reform can be anything but gradual, the position that general education is only curricular, and the belief that students alone are responsible for the integration of knowledge; the incompatibility between proposed changes and the organizational culture that characterizes one's institution (Quehl, Bergquist, & Subbiondo, 1999); and the perpetuation of disciplinary "molds" that may stifle interdisciplinary teaching and learning (Boyer Commission, 1998).

- ◇ **Charges.** During the several weeks of our inquiries into curricular reform trends and caveats, the Steering Committee further facilitated a campus-wide dialogue regarding the very purpose of both our project and general education itself. Through a variety of means described later in this paper, we posed the following types of questions to our students and faculty colleagues: What is the problem for which reform is the answer? What skills, competencies, and qualities should be realized in our graduates? and, What are we not doing now in our general education program that we should be doing? Below are the most frequently cited charges for general education and its reform as reflected in the responses we received:

    - ○ Provide an integrated curriculum
    - ○ Stimulate integrated thinking in our students
    - ○ Inspire a habit of service to others
    - ○ Foster the development of leadership skills
    - ○ Encourage reflectiveness, particularly with regard to values
    - ○ Stimulate thought that is critical and creative
    - ○ Increase geographic and cultural awareness
    - ○ Respond to the need for technological literacy
    - ○ Incorporate requirements across all four years
    - ○ Develop skills of increasing complexity

- Hold students accountable for areas of knowledge
- Present program as a set of skills and concepts, not courses
- Embed assessment throughout the curriculum
- Guide students to be lifelong learners

◇ **Best Practices.** As a final form of preparation for the task of critically examining and revising our curriculum, the Steering Committee studied several general education programs that are known for being innovative, learner-centered, and inspired by institutional missions similar to our own. Receiving the most scrutiny were curricula that: provide a set of coordinated learning experiences for freshman students; conceptualize general education as a four-year process of sequential and interdisciplinary learning; and seek to integrate curricular and co-curricular activities as complementary growth opportunities. Though we were somewhat concerned at first that familiarizing ourselves with such best practices might limit the possibilities we would consider, the process had the opposite effect: The committee learned of ideas that are enabling us to disengage from various ways of thinking that for some of us have become conventional and somewhat confining.

◇ **Freshman-Year Program.** The most recent work of the Steering Committee has centered on beginning to translate what we have learned from our preparatory analyses into concrete proposals. As a point of departure, we have selected the freshman-year program. Among the proposals receiving consideration to date are: integrating our Freshman Seminar with other general education courses typically taken by students in their first year; offering many of our 100-level general education courses as team-taught interdisciplinary seminars; or restructuring our foundational courses around liberal arts issues that are then approached from the perspectives of various content areas. Although no idea has yet been sufficiently fleshed out, some of our faculty do plan to pilot test innovative variants of our Freshman Seminar in the next academic year.

Implementation and the Challenges Ahead

After two months of reading, discussing, and communicating, the Steering Committee is satisfied with the groundwork it has laid but daunted by the task of building a defensible and viable edifice. Given that the college community is in relative agreement regarding the charges for general education reform, how do we develop a curriculum that effectively responds to all of them? Assuming that we will soon arrive at a proposal for offering a coordinated freshman-year program, how do we meaningfully integrate such a program with corresponding programs in the sophomore, junior, and senior years? As the committee and larger college community have pondered these and other questions, a number of challenges have presented themselves and most likely will shape our reform agenda over the next several months.

- How do we encourage integration of learning within and across disciplines?
- What are ways in which we might systemically foster the development of character, service learning, and leadership skills?
- How do we hold students accountable for their learning across all four years of their college education?
- What does it mean to be culturally and technologically literate and how do we realize that literacy in our students?
- Do/should articulation agreements and state education program requirements place constraints on the shape that our curriculum ultimately takes?
- How do we ensure that the skills we develop across the four years of a general education program are of increasing complexity?
- Should we continue to follow a distributional requirement model or move toward a core curriculum model?
- How can assessment practices be developed and characterized so that they are more than just curricular supplements?
- What are the implications of a learner-centered curriculum for how we teach our students?

- How do we better integrate what is taking place in our general education courses with what is taking place in our major area courses?
- What are the consequences of general education reform for faculty development priorities and allocations?
- How do we connect curriculum reform to practices and policies in Student Programs and Services (i.e., how do we create a "seamless web of learning")?
- What are techniques by which faculty and student ownership of proposed curriculum changes might be facilitated?
- How do we structure the academic calendar so that it supports rather than hinders the improvement of student learning?

Lessons Learned from the Process

As with any major initiative, the announcement of a comprehensive reform of our general education program aroused the expectation in our faculty and students that the process would result in a sufficiently significant change to justify the effort required of it. Although our curricular project is still in its adolescence, it is already evident to many that the process has been a worthwhile undertaking.

- **Teamwork and communication.** One of the principal enabling goals in the Eureka College Strategic Plan pertains to the improvement of institution-wide communication and teamwork. To that end, the Steering Committee: contains campus-wide representation; has held only meetings that are open to the entire college community; has created a web page that includes meeting minutes, solicitations of feedback, and feedback summaries; has sponsored a curriculum reform workshop; plans to hold several "town meetings"; and plans to send representatives to the monthly meetings of our residence halls and Greek organizations. If nothing else, this process has reminded us of the value of holding well-informed, transparent proceedings and of the need for such a model to be emulated in other areas of campus governance.

- **Reflection and evaluation.** Because our curriculum reform workshop was held on a Friday night, one might have expected that the interest level of our participants would have waned as the evening progressed. Quite the contrary, many faculty members left the workshop feeling rejuvenated, experiencing a renewed enthusiasm for being involved in general education at a liberal arts college and for continuing to pursue creative avenues in the classroom. At a time when faculty meetings tend to be dominated by committee reports and curriculum votes and when faculty face increasing demands from teaching, service, and scholarship, there is no small reward to be gained by pausing occasionally to reflect on why we are in the academy and what we can do to better represent it.

References

Association of American Colleges (AAC). 1994. *Strong foundations: Twelve principles of effective general education programs.* Washington, D.C.: AAC.

Barr, R. B., and J. Tagg. 1995. From teaching to learning - A new paradigm for undergraduate education. *Change* 27(6):13-25.

The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. 1998. *Reinventing undergraduate education: A blueprint for America's research universities.* Stony Brook: State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Gaff, J. G. 1980. Avoiding the potholes: Strategies for reforming general education. *Educational Record,* Fall: 50-59.

Hersh, R. H. 1997. Intentions and perceptions: A national survey of public attitudes toward liberal arts education. *Change* 29(2):16-23.

Levine, A. 1990. Curriculi-curricula. *Change* 22(2):46-51.

Quehl, G. H., W. H. Bergquist, and J. L. Subbiondo. 1999. Fifty years of innovations in undergraduate education: Change and stasis in the pursuit of quality. *USA Group Foundation New Agenda Series™* 1(4):54-57.

Ratcliff, J. L. 1997. What is a curriculum and what should it be? In *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum: A comprehensive guide to purposes, structures, and practices*, ed. J. G. Gaff and J. L. Ratcliff. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Subbiondo, J. L. 1994. General education in the New American College: Integrating theory and practice. *Perspectives* 24(1-2):27-35.

John A. Halpin is Associate Professor of Psychology at Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois.

A Core Values Process: Giving Life to the Mission

Gary J. Boelhower

Institutional mission effectiveness can be enhanced significantly by an intentional core values process that includes identification of core values, communication of core values, and integration of core values into every facet of the institution. The Core Values Process that is being used at Marian College has brought renewed reflection to the mission and the implementation of the mission.

It is almost a commonplace assertion today in books and articles on leadership and effective management that strong institutions have a clear understanding of their core mission and values. Employees know what they are working toward; they know the kinds of attitudes and priorities that motivate the organization.

The Core Values Process at Marian College began shortly after Dr. Richard Ridenour took office as President in August 1998. He renamed the Presidential Planning Committee the VISTA Committee (Vision, Initiative, Success, Tomorrow, Action) and asked the committee to identify the key values of the institution as a way to focus reflection and action in tune with the mission of the college. The VISTA Committee included the president; the vice presidents of academics, business and finance, institutional advancement, and student life; as well as broad representation from across the college, including students.

The VISTA Committee spent six meetings reflecting on the mission of the college and the experience of its various members in order to identify a set of core values. The first issue raised in the Committee was "What is a core value?" The Committee used the definition of James Collins and Jerry Porras in *Built to Last*: "Core values are the organization's essential and enduring tenets–a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have *intrinsic* value and importance to those inside the organization." (Harpercollins, 1994) This definition helped steer the Committee toward those lasting elements that truly spoke to the heart of the institution.

Values name primary motivating forces within people's lives and within institutions. The analogy of a home and its construction may clarify the meaning of a value and a set of core values. The top floors of a house might be considered the daily decisions and actions, policies and procedures that make up a person's life or the life of an institution. Although the majority of one's home time is spent in the first and second story of the house, the foundation is critical to the house's solidity. The foundation stands for the values that undergird the everyday choices and activities. The foundation answers the why question. Why does one choose a particular action over others, one policy over another, one program over another, one way of doing things over another? Taking the analogy further, the key structural elements of the foundation would stand for the institution's set of core values. The core values are that aspect of the foundation that cannot be changed without affecting the structural integrity of the building. They identify a person's or institution's priorities and basic assumptions, what is seen as critically important.

The process of identifying the core values began with the VISTA Committee using a lengthy brainstorming process that literally filled the walls of the boardroom. First, committee members wrote down their set of core values on sticky notes, one value to a note. Some members had five values while others had nine or ten. Everyone was given a chance to voice all of the values perceived to be at the heart of the institution. There were no judgments made about the values and no synthesizing of like concepts into categories. All of the sticky notes were put up on the walls. The committee was then divided into three small teams to review the notes and group them together into like categories without speaking. Each team grouped the values differently. After several rounds in which categories were enlarged, diminished, joined, or split off, the small groups stopped changing the groupings. At this point, the various groupings were recorded and the lists were sent out to the committee members for reflection. The committee was asked to consider if anything critical to the institution was missing from the groupings and if there was anything that needed rearranging in the groupings.

At the next meeting members reviewed the groupings, added words, collapsed some groups together and agreed upon a final set of groups. The following meeting focused on naming the groups, finding a value word that represented the words in each group. At this point, the process of simmering and distilling began. The question "What is really at the core of who we are?" was asked in many different ways. What identifies our unique essence? What couldn't we live without? What would we still do even if it required great sacrifice? Although lively discussion was part of the entire process, the interaction during this step was particularly charged. Discussion often reflected on the history of the institution, its sponsoring body, and people's felt experience of its identity. Finally, after two meetings of deep listening to each other and struggling with the meaning of words, the VISTA committee agreed on a set of three core values.

The VISTA committee also agreed that the process they had experienced was a valuable one and that the core values of the institution had to come from the entire community in order to have the support of the entire community. Therefore, each committee member agreed to meet with two or three constituencies in the college. Every facet of the college was involved in homogeneous meetings. Faculty worked in divisional groups, staff worked in departmental groups; and there were several groups of students. Generally, groups spent two 90-minute meetings brainstorming values, grouping their ideas and deciding upon a list of core values. Some groups met for an additional 90 minutes to complete their task. Each group chose a representative to present their final list to the VISTA committee.

The VISTA committee had a lengthy meeting during which each of the homogeneous group representatives presented their set of values. Again, the sheets of paper lined the walls of the board room. However, it was immediately apparent that there was a great deal of consensus among the groups. Although the final few words chosen by the groups were not always identical, very often the ideas were quite similar. The various homogeneous groups identified lists of three to six core values. The Board of Trustees also experienced the process and added their list as input to the VISTA committee.

At the following meeting, the work of analysis and synthesis began all over again. The discussion was arduous but fruitful. Often the connotation and tone of a word was considered at length. Finally, the committee decided upon five core values which identify the heart of Marian College, its particular uniqueness and heritage.

The process of identification had taken approximately 18 months. It was just the beginning of the Core Values Process. The next step was to define each of the core values. Again, the VISTA committee decided upon a process that would include the entire faculty and staff. At an inservice day, the president introduced the next stage in the Core Values Process. He reviewed the history of the process and thanked the participants again for their input into the identification of core values. Then, the faculty and staff were divided up into heterogeneous groups. Each group worked for an hour defining one of the core values. The definition process began with each person being asked to recall a personal experience related to the particular core value assigned to the group, either a positive or negative experience that reminded the person of the importance or centrality of this core value. After persons shared their experiences, they began to define the core value; first individually, then in a group of four, and finally in a group of eight. At the end of the hour, each heterogeneous group had a one-sentence definition of the core value they had been assigned. The groups ended their discussions by identifying positive and negative behaviors that support and detract from the core value they were assigned. The definitions will be reviewed by the VISTA committee in order to determine a final brief definition for each of the core values.

The VISTA committee sees the Core Values Process as a continuing challenge to live the core values. The identification and definition of the core values are simply the starting point for integrating the values more fully into every dimension of the life of the college. Although the VISTA committee has not identified all of the steps in continuing the Core Values Process, in my previous work with organizations, the following components have been central in the integration process.

Communication of Core Values

Once the core values and their definitions have been determined, they must be communicated consistently and effectively throughout the organization and the various publics with which it interacts. Methods of communication are explored and implemented. Newsletters, calendars, bookmarks, posters, videos, and employee meetings are just some of the ways that the core values can be communicated. The communication processes must match the particular organization. This component of the integration process requires continuing educational programming to enable all persons within the institution to gain a common understanding of the core values. New employees need to be oriented to the values as well. The core values should not be presented simply from a theoretical standpoint. Their practical application must be understood in terms of the behaviors and attitudes of persons. One effective strategy for reflection on the core values is to have various departments identify specific everyday behaviors that build up or tear down the values that are the heart reality of the institution. With this kind of reflection, employees begin to see the usefulness of the values focus in their own work. The process of communication of the values never ends. New and creative means to keep the core values in the minds and hearts and working consciousness of all employees must be found.

Values-Based Strategic Planning

With the identification and communication of the core values, a values-based strategic planning effort can be initiated. Simply put, the core values are used as central criteria in the review of resources, opportunities, and other environmental factors. Literally, each and every major goal and objective must be judged on the basis of the core values. In a sense, the core values provide a set of key questions to ask of every aspect of the plan. Values-based strategic planning will also determine the pace and focus of the values integration process. A clearly-delineated timeline should be defined to keep the process on course.

Values-Based Policy Development

In this component of the values-integration process, the policies, procedures, and structures of the institution are reflected upon from the perspective of the chosen core values. The required core curriculum may also be revised in relation to this value core. These processes take considerable time and effort, depending upon the degree of dissonance between the core values and the existing policies, structures, procedures, and curriculum. Depending upon its size and complexity, an institution may decide to work at this policy revision or development one area or one department at a time over the course of several years. The area of structures and procedures is often difficult to analyze from a values perspective. Often structures or procedures build up over the years with little attention to the mission orientation of the institution.

Values-Based Appraisal System

Although the appraisal system may be considered one of the many policies and procedures for values-based development, I think it is of such significance that it merits some attention of its own. An employee appraisal system needs to be implemented based on the core values. Critical to this step is the identification by employees and their coaches or managers of specific behaviors that actualize the core values or detract from their attainment. Based on the identification of value-related behaviors, explicit expectations for employees are developed and incorporated into job descriptions and standards. I believe the core values should permeate the appraisal process of top-level managers first, and then be worked down into the other levels of employees. In this way, there is an inbuilt process of education as information about the values-based appraisal cascades through the levels of the organization.

Values-Based Selection Process

A personnel selection process based on values is created. Specific instruments, interview questions, and values-related expectations are created and used in the selection process. It is critical that job listings and publicity adequately describe the values climate of the position and refer to the core values and behaviors expected of the candidate for the position. With adequate publicity there will be a certain amount of self-selection in the application process. Of all the dimensions of values integration, it can be argued that this aspect is most important. Unless there is a fit between the institutional values and the persons who are hired into the institution, integration will happen only in a forced and artificial way. However, when persons come to the organization with personal values that are congruent with the mission of the institution, the core values are welcomed and implemented.

Values-Based Organizational Assessment

This final component of the values integration process includes all previous components as well. One looks at the institution as a whole in terms of its core values and determines specific outcomes of the values integration process. In other words, what specific changes do we plan to bring about through values integration? Outcomes are defined and methods of outcome assessment are investigated and chosen. Benchmark data within and outside the institution are collected with which to compare assessment results. Concretely, this values-based organizational assessment will include the use of such instruments as student satisfaction surveys and employee satisfaction surveys, as well as measurements of interactions, behaviors, and other outcomes related to the core values.

The Core Values Process at Marian College is in its second year. The core values have been identified through a process that involved all personnel, the board of trustees, and significant numbers of students. Presently, the VISTA Committee is in the process of creating a brief definition for each core value based on the input of faculty and staff. The process of communicating the values in varied ways has also begun. The next steps in the process will include several core-values integration strategies that are being identified by members of the committee coordinating the process. Results to date include a set of core values, communication strategies to articulate the core values among all publics, plans for integrating core values in new ways across the institution. Perhaps the most important result, however, is the heightened awareness about the mission of the institution and the challenge to live that mission.

A values integration process is a unique form of organizational development based on the critical motivators of an organization. The core values provide a defined set of criteria to guide everything from writing policy to appraising personnel, from hiring to specific behavioral expectations of employees. Values become enfleshed in actions and attitudes. When the members of an organization understand its core values and implement those core values, the mission and purpose of the institution are realized.

Gary J. Boelhower is Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs at Marian College of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

The Evolution of Strategic Planning at a Two-Year Technical College: Changing the Culture of a Centralized Bureaucracy

Vicki J. Martin
John R. Birkholz

The culture of a centralized bureaucracy at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) has been transformed by formalizing shared decision-making structures and by aligning those structures with the strategic and quality planning processes of the college. Shared decision-making has been strengthened through our contractual agreement with Local 212-faculty union that delineates the structure of planning committees and the decision-making process.

Ongoing, institutional planning is critical for a viable, productive, and effective college. Planning is critical because in a rapidly changing environment, the college must be ready to respond to customers' needs before the competition does. Planning at MATC provides a framework for decisions and communication; it is a system for setting goals, determining strategies, and identifying measures and targets. It also promotes alignment of college resources to fulfill the needs of the college and is a vehicle for changing the culture.

MATC is committed to being a world-class institution that empowers its faculty, staff, and students to realize their potential. One way to realize this vision is through the strategic planning process. MATC's strategic planning process is based on the best practice model of former Baldrige Award winners and has been adapted to fit our shared governance structure (see Figure 1). The model is the *Plan-Do-Check-Act* learning cycle (PDCA). This model provides a systematic approach that is used to address key areas for improvement in the college and is linked to customer needs. The college has completed one full cycle of the model and is currently in the second year of implementation.

Background

Of the 16 technical colleges in Wisconsin, MATC is the largest with four campuses and numerous satellite sites for instruction and a head count of approximately 65,000 students annually. MATC is one of the oldest and largest technical colleges in the country having been established in 1911 by state statute for vocational, technical, and adult education schools. MATC offers 68 associate degree programs, 37 technical diploma programs, Adult High School, apprenticeships as well as Basic Skills, English as a Second Language, High School Contract, and School-to-Work.

Based on past NCA recommendations, in 1992 the college adopted a Hoshin Planning Model for strategic planning to ensure stakeholder involvement in setting the direction of the college. In addition, the college community recognized the importance of involving and gaining input by its entire constituency. This planning process began to utilize the concepts and tools of quality improvement as a basis for changing the culture of the college.

Strategic Planning—Defined

Strategic planning is a formal process designed to help an organization identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements of its environment." Alignment refers to matching the college's mission and goals to the needs of its environment that consists of the political, social, economic, technological, and educational ecosystems. (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997, p. 15). The strategic planning process supplies the organization with tools that promote future thinking, applies the systems approach, allows for setting goals and strategies, provides a common framework for decisions and communication, and relies on measuring performance (Steiner, 1979).

Strategic planning is a continuous or iterative process. The "plan" part of the cycle includes environmental scanning, internal and external stakeholder input, future scenario planning, along with setting goals and measurable strategies to achieve them. The "do" part of the cycle is concerned with the detailed implementation of the plan. The "check" part of the cycle involves verifying the activities and "act" identifies the effectiveness of the activities that are then changed and/or modified.

Strategic planning is also a philosophy because it involves thought processes geared toward discerning possible future alternatives. It involves strategic thinking that is "arraying options through a process of opening up institutional thinking to a range of alternatives and decisions that identify the best fit between the institution, its resources, and the environment" (Rowley, et.al, 1997, p. 15).

Futuring, as Albrecht (1994) refers to it, interprets the future into strategic actions and responses and uses planning skills to accomplish the plans that have the best chance of success. The end product of strategic planning is not as much about writing a plan, as it is to change thinking and introduce a model in which ongoing decisions are made strategically.

Current Strategic Planning Process Model
P-D-C-A

Check	*Situation analysis* • Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) • Environmental Scanning (STEEP) • Database – Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) - past performance/current situation • Stakeholder/Student needs - internal - external • 3-yr Plan Evaluation Data • Scenarios • Core Planning Committee/Cabinet goals • NCA accreditation • State statutes
Act	*Select Goals/Key Directions* *Develop/Revise/Review* • Shared Vision • Values/Principles • Mission/Purposes
Plan	*College-Wide Strategic Plan – 5 yr.* • Focus/goals • Objectives • Strategies • Success measures/targets • Preliminary Resource Allocation *Campus/Divisional/Departmental Operational Plan – 3 yr.* • Annual goals • Activity Plans • Matrix of Objectives, Measures, Targets, Timelines • Evaluation Plan
Do	*Implement the Plan*
Check	*Review and Communication* • Monthly • Quarterly • Annually
Act	*Revise or Standardize Plan* • Based on assessment

Strategic planning is also a structure or system that links the goals and strategies of the college to the operating plans and budgets. Strategy connects stakeholder needs with the organization's mission, vision, and values. It is based on accurately reading the external and internal environments and developing proactive strategic responses.

The central value of planning is to provide guidance for a college. "Continuous strategic planning that is future-oriented, fosters dynamic programming and is based on sound financial and operational strategies is the key to maximizing the college's strengths and is a basis for ensuring that the college can continue to meet the needs of its constituency" (NCA Accreditation Criterion Four Committee Report, 1998, p. 5).

Other challenges driving colleges to consider strategic planning include the push for accountability by the public and the students who pay a larger portion of their tuition. Reduced funding and limited resources have also shifted attention to the need for planning and measuring effectiveness. Shifts due to technology have expanded access to information globally and forced colleges to face their competition, who may deliver learning faster, more conveniently, and with comparable quality. The phrase to describe this shift is referred to as the "Knowledge Age."

Planning in the Knowledge Age requires "new strategy setting that is broad-based, participatory, and empowers action and initiative." Some knowledge age standards include mass customization, timeliness, responsiveness, coherence, and convenience.

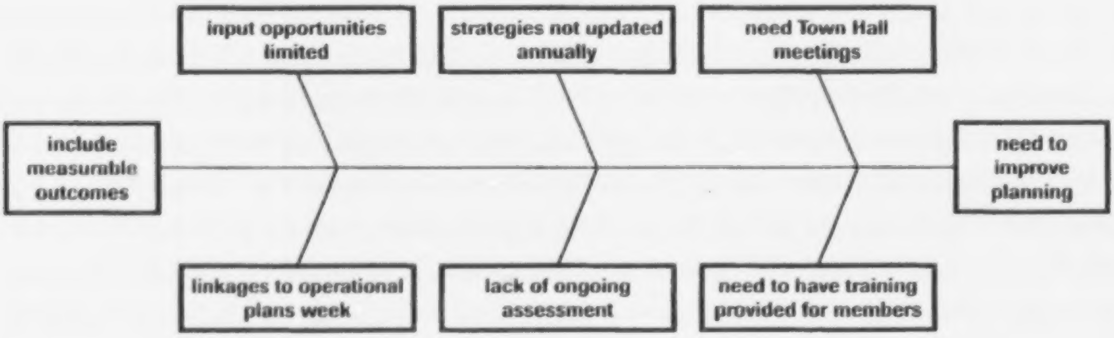
Colleges can serve as learning brokers and add value by being able to assess and deliver learning experiences tailored to the needs of individuals and organizations in the community. Emerging virtual colleges are examples of new tools and learning experiences in leading-edge community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 1997).

The Planning Process

The initial Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) was formed in 1993 with cross-functional membership to assure input from across the college community. This committee included members from the faculty, staff, administration, and a community representative. Over the first several months of the planning process, the SPSC membership evolved into a group that was comprised of 50% represented and 50% non-represented employees as well as external representatives.

The actual planning process began with the development of a college-wide vision for the future. A statement was developed over several months and was sent out for college-wide feedback.

Based on the recommendations of the NCA internal self-study committees, the SPSC addressed the concerns and recommendations made by this group to improve our planning process. The following fishbone diagram illustrates the major causes of ineffective planning as identified by our NCA self-study committee.


input opportunities limited
strategies not updated annually
need Town Hall meetings
include measurable outcomes
need to improve planning
linkages to operational plans week
lack of ongoing assessment
need to have training provided for members

Several additional leverage points for improvement were identified based on our model and feedback we received from self-study committees as follows:

1. Design and implement a formal college review process,
2. Train key executives to serve as Champions for the goals,
3. Use customer requirements in the planning process.

In 1999 MATC instituted a formal presidential review process. This process was effective and served as a learning tool for understanding accountability, the interconnectivity of goals, objectives and strategies, and process improvement. Strategy owners were trained in the seven-step improvement process (a more detailed PDCA process). Change in the organization was evidenced by the use of the systematic process that used data to demonstrate positive movement on strategies to meet the goals of the college. Feedback from the Review Team and Champions was very positive and lessons learned were incorporated into the next planning process. For example, Champions wanted two formal reviews instead of one for the 2000-2001 year plan.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) gathered the goals of the Core Committees of the College as well as other key constituent groups. The Core Committees include the following: Budget; Enrollment Management; Academic Advisory; and the Continuous Quality Improvement Steering, Marketing, Student Outcomes Assessment Committee. Other committees who were asked to participate in the process of formulating the direction of the committee and its goals included the Forward Technology Committee and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. These two committees' work was integrated after the goals had been established since their work was not completed when the preliminary budget materials were sent to the MATC budget managers.

Concomitant to these processes, the External Committee of NCA has completed their work and submitted their recommendations based on the Environmental Scan they conducted. These recommendations were integrated into the strategies related to the goals of the college.

The Education, Services, and Institutional Relations (ESIR) subcommittee of the Board of Directors of MATC expressed concern about the strategic goals of the college. The goals need to reflect the educational purposes of MATC as well as incorporate measurement to ensure we are meeting the goals and purposes. It was agreed that the strategies related to the goals needed to be rewritten to reflect this feedback.

The SPSC and the chairs of the Core Committees were invited to attend the Joint President's and Executive Vice-President's cabinet meeting to hear the State Board goals and strategies and to update everyone on the planning model and our Institutional Effectiveness plan. A town hall meeting was held to receive feedback about the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

Goals

Goals allow us to plan, evaluate, and revise our activities. A goal is a general statement of where we want to go. It is an agreed upon set of purposes or directions. The goals for 2000-2001 reflect the issues facing the college, the environment in which the college exists, and our capacity to become more effective over time. The SPSC committee developed these goals as the vital few activities that will have the most impact on our ability to satisfy the mission of providing quality occupational, academic, and lifelong education for improving personal and employment potential.

The SPSC reviewed the mission of the college, the needs of its stakeholders, the environment, and the issues facing the college by the Core committees, External Advisory Board for NCA, and Environmental scanning outcomes for WTCS, and the MATC Board.

To determine our college-wide goals, the SPSC used an affinity process to sort the goals from the Core Committees. The headers for each of the sorted inputs constituted the goal statements. Using the goals of the key planning committees of the College in determining the strategic direction marked a departure from our previous planning goals. Past goals were determined solely through the SPSC and the inputs they received from their colleagues. The outcome of using core planning committees' goals is reflected in new goals.

The agreed-upon goals for MATC for 2000-2001 are:

Goal: **Improve recruitment and retention.** MATC will focus on refining and implementing targeted recruitment and retention efforts that promote enrollment and retention of a diverse student population. These efforts will be responsive and flexible in effectively meeting the lifelong learning needs of our students and community.

Goal: **Coordinate and streamline all academic and support function processes.** MATC will focus on coordinating and streamlining processes using quality practices that ensure effective resource management and operational efficiency which add value to the student's learning environment.

Goal: **Improve institutional effectiveness.** MATC will focus its commitment to excellence by improving and expanding measures of effectiveness and accountability to ensure that our performance matches our institutional purposes.

Goal: **Focus on learning.** MATC will focus on strengthening its commitment to learning excellence through staff development efforts, innovative and flexible methods for instructional and service delivery, and teaching and curricula that empowers every learner to develop current and emerging skills and abilities.

Strategic Planning Feedback Plan

Strategic Planning is a process for reaching agreement on the goals and strategies required for achieving our mission, to promote understanding and ownership of the goals, involve the stakeholders in the planning process, and to use various communication methods to reach the college community.

SPSC has developed a calendar to delineate the activities that drive the process and communication of the plan. This calendar denotes feedback opportunities for the college community to respond to the plan via e-mail and through presentations to various college groups. This feedback is given to the Champion and stakeholder groups to use to revise their plan before it is finalized and implementation begins.

SPSC also conducts a yearly self-assessment based on the Baldrige Criteria for Strategic Planning. The results of this assessment revealed that an improvement area was to link strategic planning to Human Resources strategies. Based on this self-assessment, we have recommended restructuring our Core committees and specifically forming a Human Resources subcommittee reporting to the SPSC.

Conclusion

The impact of these planning processes has shifted the culture at the college from a centralized bureaucratic structure to one of involvement and participation by faculty, staff, and students. Shared governance is being strengthened by committee participation in decisions that have an impact on the future of the college. By following the PDCA cycle and following the principles of quality management, avenues for feedback and change have greatly increased. This model of collaborative governance fosters a learning environment where improvement for the benefit of our customers is paramount.

References

Albrecht, K. 1994. *The northbound train.* New York: American Management Association.

Johnston, C. G., and M. J. Daniel. 1993. *Setting the direction: Management by planning.* Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada.

Rowley, D. J., H. D. Lujan, and M. G. Dolence. 1997. *Strategic change in colleges and universities.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Steiner, G. 1997. *Strategic planning.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Vicki J. Martin is Director of Continuous Quality Improvement at Milwaukee Area Technical College in Wisconsin.

John R. Birkholz is President of Milwaukee Area Technical College in Wisconsin.

Process is Key to Plan's Power

Joseph Sertich
Steve Frantz
Anne Marie Erickson

Introduction

At Itasca Community College (ICC), strategic planning blended traditional planning elements with an innovative process that included the collection of information by computer, which resulted in a unique document. *Charting the Course*, ICC's strategic plan for 1997-2002, is a comprehensive document that incorporates a master academic plan and a facilities plan. And the process continues to play itself out: The ICC mission statement and strategic plan guide decision-making and planning within all areas of the College today.

In fact, ICC's consensus-based, inclusive strategic planning process gives the document its true long-term power and validity. By affirming and articulating values shared by college constituencies and the larger community, the process helped to shape a shared vision. This shared vision generates the impetus to follow through on planning, making it a vital document rather than a dust-collecting addition to bookshelves.

Context

Itasca Community College is a public, comprehensive, single-campus community college located in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Its student headcount is 1,200 (fall 1999). ICC is the only college in Itasca County. Of Minnesota's 87 counties, Itasca is the third largest geographically and the nineteenth largest in population (43,337 residents, 1997). The college is one of 36 member institutions of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

ICC was founded in 1922 as an autonomous junior college; its central purpose was to prepare students for transfer. The college became part of a state junior college system in 1964, and merged three years later with a technical school to become a comprehensive college. In 1981, it became part of a regional system called the Arrowhead Community Colleges. The creation of the statewide Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system in 1995 prompted a review of the Arrowhead governance structure. In 1996, the MnSCU Board of Trustees decided to dissolve the Arrowhead College Region, making ICC an autonomous college once again. A mission statement developed in 1980 had guided ICC until then.

These significant changes in governance, coupled with the appointment of Dr. Joseph Sertich as the new ICC president, prompted a rethinking of the mission and goals. The college initiated the planning process in 1997, its 75th anniversary year.

Challenges

ICC's mission and goals needed to be distinctive, yet aligned with the MnSCU system's mission and goals. The mission and goals statements must communicate appropriately to internal and external constituencies, yet reflect the environment of the institution. They should set a direction in language broad enough to encompass specific annual objectives, without becoming a series of vague abstractions. In order to articulate shared values, the strategic plan must address the future while valuing the best of the institution's past. The document had to be broad in scope, taking into account the college's academic programs as well as student services and facilities plans.

Incorporating Innovative Technology in the Planning Process

"Preparation for Strategic Planning" for all ICC faculty and staff took place off-campus during a one-day retreat in early February. The session included an overview of the upcoming planning process as well as presentations on ICC's history, college and service area demographics, outcome-based planning, future trends, creativity, and "new designs" for two year colleges. Participants nominated representatives from each of the campus constituencies to participate in the "next step."

Community leaders joined the college representatives for a series of meetings in February and March. Again, the sessions were held on "neutral ground," i.e., off-campus. Forty-eight people were actively engaged in ICC's strategic planning process; forty percent of the participants were from area communities, while ICC students, faculty, staff, and administrators comprised the remaining 60 percent. Community members represented educational partners (including two area school districts and the University of Minnesota), business and industry, and the non-profit sector.

Participants gathered at the college's Computer Education Center, located in downtown Grand Rapids. They employed GroupSystems V computer software to accelerate the information gathering process by allowing for simultaneous entry. This innovative technology compresses the strategic planning timeframe and protects the anonymity of each participant. It maximizes individual input while limiting the time commitment of participants. The college provided assistance to participants who were not comfortable with computers and/or lacked keyboarding skills. The 48 participants were divided into four groups of 12 each for all of the planning sessions. The four groups each met for three hours in February and again in March, for a total time commitment of six hours.

Steve Frantz, from the MnSCU System Office, facilitated the electronic meeting sessions. Several weeks in advance of the initial meeting, participants received a packet of materials prepared by Dr. Frantz, including MnSCU's strategic plan, data on trends, and several papers about the future of education. This information created the necessary anticipatory set for the 48 participants. Dr. Frantz noted that participants would not be discussing these predictions for the future, but would be asked for their ideas about addressing and utilizing changes in the national and global environments.

The first meeting served to generate information. Participants defined internal and external stakeholder perceptions and expectations, developed metaphors for ICC, and used an exercise incorporating a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). More than 350 pages of raw data were collected. Dr. Frantz analyzed and synthesized much of the data in preparation for the follow-up sessions. For example, from the SWOT analysis he identified themes that became the source of a purpose statement containing the long-term goals.

One month later, additional electronic meeting sessions were held to discuss, rank, and prioritize the data that emerged from the first session. Materials compiled from the initial planning meeting were provided in advance to participants for their thoughtful consideration. Participants' analyses and input resulted in drafts of values, vision, and mission statements, and in seven broad goals.

Validation Process

Decisions from the planning sessions were brought to all faculty and staff for validation and revision at a college development day in March. Four options were proposed for each of the statements (values, vision, and mission). Following discussion, participants voted–and, in all cases, the most concise statement garnered the most votes. During four open forums, Dr. Sertich presented a draft of the resulting document and invited individual reaction as well as comment from each of the collective bargaining units. The entire campus community approved the new values, vision, and mission statements in April.

Writing Process: Capturing Many Voices

As the above discussion illustrates, ICC executed a very inclusive, consensus-based planning process. Listening to and capturing the many voices contained in the GroupSystems data became the central task for Anne Marie Erickson, the writer/designer of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Erickson was familiar with ICC's history, traditions, and culture. She also served as ICC's Self-Study Coordinator. The self-study process occurred concurrently with the college's strategic planning initiative. Both processes benefitted from the focus brought to bear on ICC's mission and its goals for institutional improvement, and from the lively exchange of ideas elicited by such a focus.

Because the resulting document needed to be a thoughtful one that addressed the challenges mentioned above, the writing process required time. Erickson met with colleagues, reviewed information, and drew upon the richness of ideas contained in the GroupSystems compilation. Other resources included the materials Dr. Frantz had provided to planning participants; MnSCU's strategic plan and plans from several other colleges; several institutions' Self-Study Reports and other information gathered at the NCA Annual Meeting; demographic data; input from the self-study process; and *New Designs for the Two-Year Institution of Higher Education: Executive Summary Report*, by George H. Copa and William Ammentorp.

The document that emerged is a holistic picture which incorporates the opinions and visions that contributed to the planning process. It honors the institution's past with the theme "building a future on a strong past." In addition, the discussion of each of the goals opens with a premise that reflects participants' statements about the college's current status and strengths, coupled with a vision for the future. The document addresses the future with the overarching theme of "charting the course," as well as with specific activities and measures of success under each of the seven strategic goals. Much of the material incorporates comments taken directly from the GroupSystems data.

Charting the Course, 1997-2002, is a comprehensive document that includes historical background; the master academic plan; an explication of the mission statement; student and area demographics; and broad national, state, and regional trends in areas such as labor force, technology, and employment. Specific "planning considerations" statements follow the sections covering the broad trends and the student and community profiles. *Charting the Course* also incorporates a facilities plan that reflects a college/community task force's vision for ICC's facilities.

The unique structure of *Charting the Course* reflects the three interlocking themes of the Learning Experience, Learning Community, and Learning Organization that flow out of the College's mission, values, and vision. These themes evolved from the document's underlying premise: academics should set the standards and drive the planning process. The themes provide the organizational structure of the Master Academic Plan. The Academic Plan contains seven broad goals. The first three goals relate directly to academics. Goals 4-7 support the academic mission with assets such as technology, facilities, and human and financial resources. Everything articulated in Goals 1-7 serves ICC's educational mission to the internal and external learning communities.

Planning clearly was accomplished *with* the community, not *for* the community. The connection with community became a central theme within the document because the community is a vital part of the college; it defines who it is and what it does. In fact, Strategic Planning participants, who were asked to create a metaphor for Itasca Community College, came up with a strong and appropriate image: A town commons. The town commons belongs to, serves as a resource for, and is accessible to the community as a whole.

The Process of Communicating the College's Vision

In addition to the *Charting the Course* booklet, a widely-disseminated brochure presents the College's vision, values, mission, and goals statements. The annual strategic objectives under each of the seven goals are printed and inserted into the brochure. The new strategic objectives are also incorporated into *Charting the Course,* along with an annual "report card" on the previous year's objectives. The Strategic Plan was designed with a flexible binding so that it can truly function as a working document. The college's catalog, home page, the student handbook, and faculty and staff handbook also feature information on the mission.

Several administrators have presented workshops on ICC's strategic planning process to staff and board members from community non-profit organizations. In addition, the president and other administrators regularly represent the college to alumni, friends, business, and community leaders, and the general public. In doing so, they often address the college's mission, goals, and objectives, and disseminate printed information about them.

And the Process Continues to Play Itself Out...

The vision articulated in the Strategic Plan remains vital to ICC's quest for quality. The strategic plan is "the rudder in the water" for the college: it drives operational planning, institutional effectiveness, facilities priorities, and annual action plans and strategies. The planning cycle is, as the term implies, an ongoing process that involves all functional areas of the campus.

For example, annual strategic objectives incorporate specific, short-range initiatives that enable the college to address the seven broad goals. Seven five-member Goal Teams are charged with identifying strategic objectives under each goal. The Goal Teams have broad representation from faculty, staff, and administration. For the sake of continuity, the composition of the Goal Teams remains basically unchanged. Thus, decisions to revise strategic objectives or initiate new objectives build upon the previous year's planning efforts. The President and Goal Team members solicit ideas for objectives from the entire campus community each spring. The two or three strategic objectives set by each Goal Team must be "smart" (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Trackable).

The Goal Teams consider how proposed activities fit in with ICC's mission, and what impact they will have on the College as a whole. In addition, Goal Teams receive a summary of recommendations from the Self-Study Report as well as a copy of the NCA consultant-evaluators' concerns to guide them in their considerations. For each objective, the Goal Teams complete a strategic action grid that includes proposed action strategies, person(s) responsible, timeline, and budget.

In addition to the structured annual process described above, ICC's strategic plan continues to demonstrate its vitality and power in other ways. ICC's 2000-2005 capital budget request explicitly links each building project to the College's mission and goals. Faculty members meeting to discuss a facilities proposal arrive with copies of *Charting the Course* in-hand. Initiatives, plans, and proposals developed by staff in all functional areas of the college routinely include statements of correspondence to the mission and goals, even though such a procedure has never explicitly been prescribed. For example, a recent proposal to establish a full-time faculty theater position was linked to the overall mission of the institution and to a strategic goal. When a convincing argument is made that a proposal is consistent with the mission and goals, is feasible, and is needed, the faculty and administration have generally supported it. (Yes, the theater position was supported!)

Conclusion

In developing its strategic plan, ICC blended traditional planning elements with a computer-aided system to accelerate the gathering of information. The process actively engaged community members as well as college faculty, staff, and students. This resulted in an inclusive planning process—and in a strategic plan that serves as a working document with long-term power to inform planning within all areas of the College. In short, ICC's Strategic Plan serves as a guide for (and simplifies) the decision-making and planning processes. It charts the course for institutional improvement.

Joseph Sertich is President of Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Steve Frantz is Director, Disabilities and Student Life, at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Anne Marie Erickson is English Instructor at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Moving the Cemetery: A Case Study in Curriculum and Institutional Renewal

J. Keith Keeling

"Reforming general education is the academic equivalent of moving a cemetery!"

I have often heard this aphorism attributed to Robert Maynard Hutchins, the famous Chancellor of the University of Chicago. I first heard it long ago while I was at a graduate student and College Staff member at the University. Occasionally I have heard it attributed to someone else. But I prefer to think of it as part of the general education legacy known at U. of C. as "the Hutchins College." (If you can confirm Hutchins' authorship, I would be grateful. If you wish to confirm someone else's authorship, I'm not so sure I want to know!) Whatever the "true" origin of this aphorism, it provides a delightful image for the process colleges periodically go through in constructing every bright new General Education Program as their monument to the ages. . . Both in the beginning and throughout the process, you have to deal with the hallowed ground and the great monuments, not to mention the dirt and bones, bequeathed by previous generations of faculty! Doing anything to cemeteries other than beautifying them, and adding to them when absolutely necessary, is a monumental task! And if you want to move one, you had better know who and what are buried where, and deal with the past respectfully.

Over several decades, since I first learned to love "the Hutchins College" curriculum, I have played a variety of roles in "moving the cemetery" at four private, liberal arts colleges in the Midwest. As a beginning teacher in my first appointment, I enthusiastically supported a general education reform that included reducing the requirement in my discipline and thus the number of faculty positions needed. . . . That valuable educational experience led to my second teaching position! Several years later I lobbied faculty opinion leaders to "make a deal" for the inclusion of important courses from another discipline I strongly believed needed to be represented in the general education program, and I also helped create and gain faculty approval for a new honors general education program. In the two colleges I have served as the chief academic officer, I have chaired faculty taskforces through the processes of study, design, approval, and implementation of major renovations of the general education and degree programs.

Through all of these adventures in moving academic cemeteries, I have remained committed to the fundamental importance of general education as central to undergraduate education and to the fundamental importance of the faculty's work in defining general education as well as degree requirements. What the faculty choose for the college's degree programs and general education program in large measure end by defining both the faculty and the college. This self-defining work about the nature of college education is the critical agenda for every "generation" of faculty at every college. A college's general education program and degree requirements are public statements about the college's identity, mission, and purposes as a community professing higher learning. They are inscriptions on the stones we leave behind to enlighten the next generation.

Does this also sound like NCA Criterion One? It should. In "professing" a general education program and the broader degree programs of which general education is a critical part, what we "profess" is a statement to our students and our world about what the college stands for and what it seeks to accomplish. That is not only NCA Criterion One, it is in the nature of college education as practiced in our society.

But Hutchins' aphorism also points back to "the ground" out of which each College's general education and degree programs rise. They grow out of a rich institutional heritage. A college's heritage, its institutional character and identity through time, shape all present faculty efforts to reshape them. Mission and purposes choose us when we choose a college, either as faculty members or as students. These and other lessons in Hutchins' aphorism were evident again in the experience at Central Methodist College (CMC) in "moving our cemetery."

Central Methodist College: A Case Study

Developing the Character Theme for the College

From its charter in 1854 until the present, the purpose of Central Methodist College has been tied to the famous exhortation of John and Charles Wesley: "Let us now unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety!" CMC's foundational conviction has been that liberal arts education and education for religious, moral, and civic character belong together. In the new "Information Age," we still believe that education must not only adequately "inform" students; it must go much further. Liberal education must "form" students in fundamental ways. Although the College has fostered this heritage throughout its history, for the past several years it has chosen to revitalize this historic mission through focusing on the theme of character formation. This strong and extensive renewal of the College has been carried out under the leadership of Dr. Marianne Inman, who became the twenty-fifth President of Central Methodist College in 1995.

Dr. Inman began her presidency by involving faculty and staff in extensive conversations about the nature and mission of the College. At the same time, she initiated two parallel sets of conversations and activities, one to renew the "town/gown" relationships with Fayette, and another to revitalize the College's relationships with the United Methodist Church. The emphasis throughout was on community participation and community renewal. Over the next two years, consensus developed around formal statements of Mission, Educational Goals, Values, and Heritage.

As this important work moved forward, conversations about the distinctive nature of this particular community of higher education began to focus increasingly on the theme of character formation in the whole of college education and in the general education program in particular. These conversations were also involved in the broad institutional self-study conducted in preparation for the NCA comprehensive visit in March 1998. From these explorations, the theme of character formation emerged as a distinctive and significant motif in CMC education. These continuing discussions of the character motif as a conscious and distinctive identity for the College were not without drama, disagreement, and significant debate. Through community forums and other conversations, the idea of character formation as an organizing motif took more definite shape, and its general meaning and implications gained increasing acceptance. As Dr. Julie Melynk, Associate Professor of English, put it, "We need to begin preaching what we practice." What had long been part of the character of education at CMC needed to be consciously articulated throughout the College's life and used as a central motif in rethinking general education and degree programs.

As the focus on the character motif gained increasing acceptance, President Inman, in consultation with the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee, appointed three taskforces. One, led by the Vice President and Dean of the College (the author), was charged with studying the general education program and degree requirements. Another, led by the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee, focused on program review, including both majors and other educational programs. The third taskforce, led by the student development and activities staff, was to explore the motif of character formation in relation to the College's co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. These groups have been at work since the spring of 1998, and will continue for years to come, as Central Methodist College continues to infuse the character focus throughout the College's institutional life.

After a year and a half of extensive conversations, both in the taskforce and with the entire faculty, the General Education Taskforce presented new degree program models for all of the College's degree programs. The proposed General Education Program and degree program models reconceived these structures entirely. Following a series of faculty forums and meetings in the spring and early fall, on September 15, 1999, the Faculty approved the new "Character Curriculum" by an overwhelming vote of 88% in favor, with only two opposing votes and several abstentions. This strong faculty consensus and enthusiasm for the new curriculum continues to support the ongoing processes of course revisions, occurring through the 1999/2000 academic year, in preparation for the full implementation of the program in the fall of 2000.

Developing the Character Curriculum

The General Education Taskforce spent some time exploring several larger issues in preparation for the task of developing new degree program and general education models. First, members of the taskforce were invited to present materials for the group to consider related to the meaning of "Character" as a significant idea in philosophy, ethics, religion, literature, psychology, and other disciplines. Books, articles, and the thought of several prominent thinkers were reviewed. Several papers were written and discussed. A bibliography began to be developed that has continued to expand. During these deliberations the group concluded that a variety of different meanings of the character theme needed to be kept in view by the college community. Rather than attempting to gain consensus for a single definition of character, the study of character from a rich variety of perspectives needed to infuse the curriculum. This would provide academic freedom for faculty in developing courses, ensure a rich diversity of academic explorations and debate, and provide a motif connecting many courses in a wide variety of subjects. Next, taskforce members were asked to collect general education programs and degree models from other colleges that they thought contained useful frameworks and ideas for how the new degree models and the general education program might be designed. These diverse educational models were then presented to the group, discussed, and critiqued.

In the next phase, several model frameworks for the curriculum were developed and explored. Realizing that every model would present many problems to be solved, several models were screened out when the group concluded the problems they presented seemed greater than the benefit to be gained. Finally a framework began to emerge that the group concluded held sufficient promise to continue developing by solving a variety of issues and problems it seemed to raise. This phase of continuing development and problem solving within a general model, involving faculty from various disciplines, lasted for some time and brought increasing numbers of faculty into the conversations. In this way, increasing ownership in the model developed as the model itself continued to evolve. By inviting individual faculty to identify problems and then working with these faculty to find solutions within the general framework proposed, consensus was gradually built. The final set of degree program models, including the general education program, was then presented to the faculty as a whole together with a proposed set of procedural rules for its deliberation and a proposed timetable for action and implementation. Throughout, the approach was not "accept or reject," but rather "help us solve the problems you identify, so that this model will work for us all." The gratifying result of this process, as noted above, was a level of faculty approval beyond our hopes. With this level of faculty support, the new curriculum will provide a strong and coherent framework for our students' education and a significant vehicle for fulfilling Central Methodist College's mission and educational goals.

The Principles of the Character Curriculum

CMC's undergraduate degree programs are all built of four components: I. General Education, II. The Academic Major(s), III. The Academic Minor(s), and IV. Electives. The character theme has been included in the general education program component but designed so that it will be involved in all four components of each student's degree program, thus providing a unifying thread for each degree as a whole.

A. The Common Core

This General Education Common Core is required for all four-year degree programs offered by Central Methodist College and is comprised of four groups of courses. [1] The Character Core (12 sem. hrs) consists of a set of courses taken by all students that examine the nature of human character as it relates to our personal lives, our life in society, and our education. These courses will be taken as a sequence running from the freshman through the senior year. [2] Courses fulfilling the Character and Physical Well Being requirement develop both understanding and life habits to support the important place of physical well being in human life (two-three sem. hrs).

The next two groups of courses in the Common Core are drawn from a variety of disciplines and will usually fulfill other requirements as well, either in general education or the major. These courses are designated with either "Stars" or "Flags." [3] Star Courses (nine sem. hrs) explore the character-relevant issues that emerge in specific disciplines and may be selected from a wide array of disciplines. Star Courses not only teach the subject matter of the discipline but also include some consideration of the issues involved in "knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good" in relation to the subject matter being studied. As a part of learning about the subject, students will consider the implications of the knowledge they gain for their intentions and actions. They will be asked not only to know the subject matter but also to consider how they should apply their knowledge to serve the common good. [4] Flag Courses (three sem. hrs) explore the rich diversity of human culture and its implications for understanding and developing character and social responsibility. Students may meet this requirement by selecting a course from one of many fields of study.

1. The Character Core .... 12 semester hours

How ought we to understand the meaning of "character," and how is the development of sound character related to education, especially college education? The idea of character as a way of both describing who we are and who we ought to be has a long and distinguished history in Western Civilization, from biblical and ancient Greek roots to the present. Similar ways of describing and evaluating human nature are prominent in non-western civilizations as well. In the history and philosophy of education, the debate about the role of education in the formation and nurture of character is also long and distinguished. The courses in this section of CMC's General Education Common Core Program will explore what college education means, how to make the most of the college experience, ways of understanding the meaning of character in human life, and how education and character are formed and related.

CMC 111	The College Adventure: An Owner's Guide	3 semester hours
CMC 122	Religion and the Human Adventure [offered as RL 122]	3 semester hours
CMC 222	Character and Literature [offered as EN 222]	3 semester hours
CMC 311	Character and Life: Beyond the College Adventure	3 semester hours

2. Character and Physical Well-Being .... 2-3 semester hours

The recognition of physical fitness and physical wellbeing as expressions of strength of character is rooted in the ancient Greek and the modern Olympic Games. Both the study of physical well being and the practice of physical well being have a long tradition in higher education. Strength of character includes 1) understanding the nature and bases of physical well being, 2) the development of physical as well as mental disciplines, 3) habits of life that support physical as well as mental well being, and 4) enhanced awareness of the meaning and applications of sportsmanship.

Either	AH 162 Women's Health or AH 163 Men's Health	3 semester hours
Or	PE 111 Character and Wellness, and one PE Activities Course	2 semester hours

3. Character and the Human Adventure .... *9 semester hours

Numerous disciplines explore issues relevant to character formation and development. How do art, music, and literature relate to knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good? What obligations do scientists have to the scientific community and to society? How should we understand and respond to the complex problems we confront in our social world? A college education that integrates high quality liberal arts learning and professional preparation to promote lifelong learning, social responsibility, and service must include explorations of these and many other ethical problems if students are to develop an appreciation for the challenges and complexities of lifelong character development. Thus, all students are required to select at least nine semester hours of Star Courses in which character-relevant issues are given special attention. As part of learning the discipline-specific material, students in Star Courses will consider the implications of the knowledge they gain for decision making in their personal and professional lives. Students in these courses will be asked not only to know the subject matter but also to consider how their knowledge should be applied and used to improve human life and the world in which we live; that is, how this knowledge can be used to serve the common good. Star Courses must be taken in three separate academic disciplines so that students explore these issues in different arenas of human life. **These courses may fulfill other requirements or be electives.*

4. Character and Cultural Diversity .... *3 semester hours

We live in a world and in an array of societies that are rich in diversity. Though the age of the "global village" is coming rapidly, it is and will remain a complex and diverse village. It is the responsibility of all human beings to develop the virtues and talents to live in justice and friendship with all their village neighbors. To fulfill the Mission of the College, all students need to study the cultural diversity in which they will spend their lives and assess how they can be effective members of communities that are rich with diversity. **These courses, designated "Flag Courses," may fulfill other requirements or be electives.*

B. Specific Degree General Education Requirements

In addition to the Common Core courses listed above, each degree offered by the College has its own distinctive educational objectives. Each degree therefore has its own distinctive set of General Education requirements designed to fulfill these degree-specific objectives. With some variations among the specific degrees, these course requirements are organized under the rubrics of "Language Skills," "Analytic Skills," "Humanities," "Social Sciences," and "Natural and Physical Sciences." A summary of general education requirements by degree is given below.

Degree	**General Education**			**Total Sem. Hrs.**
	Common Core	**Specific Degree**	**Total**	**For Degree**
Bachelor of Arts	14-15	43-49	57-64	124
Bachelor of Science	14-15	43-47	57-62	124
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	12	46	58	124
Bachelor of Music	14-15	29-33	43-48	124
Bachelor of Music Education	14-15	28-31	42-46	126
Bachelor of General Studies	14-15	37-41	51-56	124
Bachelor of Science in Education	14-15	35-41	49-56	124

The Character Theme Beyond the Curriculum

As indicated above, Central Methodist College has chosen to emphasize the importance of character development for the institution as a whole, not just the curriculum. Those who know the College are aware that this choice is an affirmation and enhancement of what is already an important dimension of many of the CMC's programs. In 1999, The John Templeton Foundation confirmed this by selecting Central Methodist College as one of the 100 colleges in the nation on its Honor Roll, published in *The Templeton Guide: Colleges that Encourage Character Development.* The College was recognized for its First-Year Programs, Faculty and Curriculum, Volunteer Service, Spiritual Growth Programs, and its Senior Year Programs. We are working to develop the character theme in other areas and programs as well.

Though the development of the "character curriculum" has been the focus of this paper, we have other stories to tell. We are still in process of exploring the meaning and means for recognizing character formation as a significant dimension of all of the College's life and work. We will be glad to share these stories as well. We welcome your suggestions for our continuing work.

Heraclitus said, "Character is destiny." Central Methodist College believes that education for character, leadership, and service is both its heritage and its destiny. In "moving our cemetery" our intention is to honor and enhance our heritage by consciously choosing the character theme in liberal arts education as our destiny.

J. Keith Keeling is Vice President and Dean of the College at Central Methodist College in Fayette, Missouri.

Collaborative Strategic Planning and Institutional Change

Ron Singer
John M. Ostheimer
Esther Letven
Art Dudycha

Introduction

Accrediting agencies have shifted the focus of evaluation from inputs to outcomes. In order for educational institutions to experience demonstrable success in achieving outcomes and effecting change, there has to be broad understanding, acceptance, and support for institutional mission and objectives. A broad based, inclusive planning process that includes representation from all constituencies both on and off campus, and is visionary and responsive to the changing environment will lead to institutional change. In addition, the planning process should be central to every major initiative the campus undertakes, and to institutional self study, assessment, and review.

Development of a Strategic Plan—The Process

In the fall of 1996, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside began its first serious strategic planning exercise. The University had just experienced a $900,000 state imposed budget cut (5% of base budget) and was facing future budget cuts because of a failure to meet enrollment targets. This strategic planning process involved faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and the Board of Regents. While the institution's mission statement was in need of review and revision, the primary motivation for comprehensive strategic planning was to develop an identity for a branch campus that, unlike the other comprehensive campuses in the U.W. System, had not established a clear identity over a long period of time.

The process by which strategic planning has proceeded is as important to the campus as the substance of the plan developed. Following a successful budget reduction exercise involving all campus constituencies that led to campus agreement on a System mandated budget cut, the Chancellor appointed a broad based University Planning Committee (UPC) made up of senior campus administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members. Broad collaboration in the planning process was essential in order to involve key constituencies in the adoption of the strategic plan and obtain campus commitment to the strategic directions that would be adopted in the plan.

The first task undertaken by the UPC was an environmental scan in which strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified. The Committee then proceeded to divide up the major planning tasks. Sequentially, as each stage of planning was taking place, subgroups made up of both committee members and others were formed. These subcommittees prepared preliminary drafts of a statement of vision, a new mission statement, a set of objectives, a set of strategies to accomplish the objectives, and a set of measurable outcomes to assess the implementation of the plan.

At every stage, the UPC sought the input of the campus at large. When final drafts were completed, the plan was submitted for approval to each of the four campus governance groups (students, faculty, academic staff, and classified staff), before being forwarded to the Board of Regents for final approval. While the process took about a year to complete, full engagement of the campus in the process was viewed as essential if this plan was to have an impact on the University's future and effect institutional change.

The Strategic Plan

The mission statement includes a set of eight objectives. There is a set of Facilitating Strategies and a set of Strategies in Support of Objectives with a number of strategies addressing each of the eight objectives. In addition, there is a set of measurable outcomes for each of the eight objectives. The first facilitating strategy in the plan is the creation of a University Planning Council (Council) to carry on the work of the UPC, which was disbanded when the final plan was approved. The Council has the same broad campus representation as its predecessor UPC. The role of the Council is to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan and to serve as a campus-wide forum for discussion of campus issues.

The mission and objectives identify six areas of emphasis: 1) quality academic programs, research and creative activity, 2) diversity, 3) recruitment and retention, 4) collaboration, 5) technology, and 6) community engagement.

Planning Structure

The Council is at the center of an ongoing planning and implementation process that also includes six committees, teams, or task forces, each focusing on one of the central aspects of the University's mission and objectives.

- **University Planning Council.** The Council, co-chaired by the Chancellor, was created by the first facilitating strategy of the University's Strategic Plan to "serve as a representative vehicle for campus dialogue on important issues facing the University, and to monitor progress in achieving measurable outcomes and the University planning process." A Strategic Plan is required to be submitted by all units to a review committee, and after review and revision these plans become a part of the University's strategic planning process.

- **Committee on Academic Planning (CAP).** The CAP was created by the Faculty Senate to advise the administration and the Faculty Senate on major program decisions and long-term academic plans; provide for faculty participation in long-range strategic planning; make recommendations on proposals to establish, discontinue, or make major changes in departments, schools, or degree programs; and approve major changes in requirements for majors, minors, or certification programs.

- **Facilities Planning Committee.** This committee considers and makes recommendations for all major reallocations of space on campus.

- **Engaged University Council (EUC).** The EUC is a broadly representative group coordinating the efforts of the University to develop and extend relationships with our community to enhance the educational experience of our students.

- **University Diversity Advisory Committee (UDAC).** The UDAC was created by Plan 2008, a campus plan to recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff of color adopted as part of a U.W. System initiative. It is a broadly representative group charged with assessing the campus climate for diversity and formulating recommendations regarding improvements.

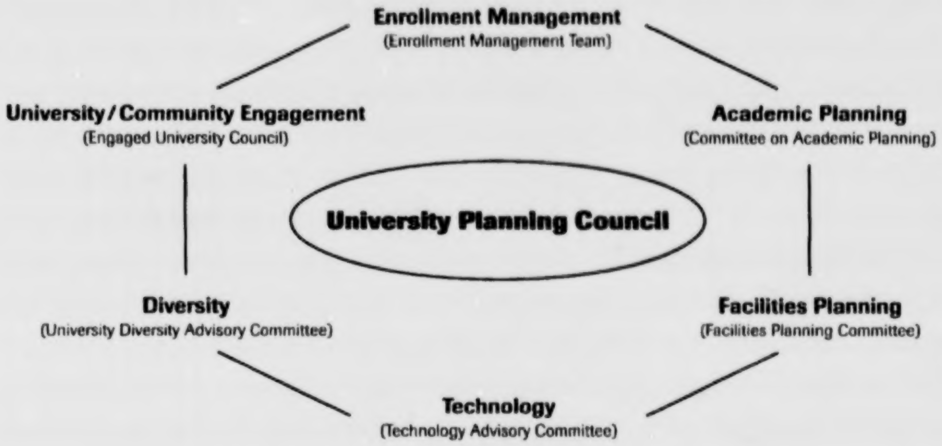
- **Technology Advisory Committee.** The Technology Advisory Committee provides advice and counsel regarding issues related to technology that have an impact on the campus at large.

Surrounding the planning structure is an annual budget process wherein high priority planning initiatives are supported with funding. Budget updates are provided by briefings held three times per year for administrators and representatives of the governance groups. Faculty position allocation recommendations go from the Deans to the Committee on Academic Planning, which annually evaluates priorities based on the department and University mission and provides a recommendation to the Provost.

Planning and Change

The planning process marked a significant departure in the way in which the University operates. In the past, committees–primarily faculty, academic staff, and student committees–served as representative bodies for their respective constituent groups. Two significant aspects of university governance experienced change as a result of the planning process. In the past, our classified staff members played little, if any, role in University planning and

Figure 1: PLANNING STRUCTURE


Enrollment Management
(Enrollment Management Team)
University / Community Engagement
(Engaged University Council)
Academic Planning
(Committee on Academic Planning)
University Planning Council
Diversity
(University Diversity Advisory Committee)
Facilities Planning
(Facilities Planning Committee)
Technology
(Technology Advisory Committee)

decision making. The creation of the UPC marked a significant departure, in that classified staff members were represented on the UPC and relevant satellite planning groups. As the UPC went about the task of gaining the approval of all campus constituencies, it became clear that this campus constituency also had to be at the table. A classified staff (hourly support staff) committee was created to represent this important component of our campus community. While in the past the other three groups had formal representation, there was little interaction among and between the different constituent groups, which contributed to the creation of silos separating them. Not only did each of the four campus constituent groups now have formal representation, but all groups now collaborate in planning and implementation at every level of planning. The strategic plan focus on collaboration is implemented at every stage of planning and implementation.

In addition to a change in process, significant substantive benefit is emerging as a result of our planning efforts.

◇ **Campus identity.** We have moved significantly in the direction of developing a community based focus for our university. Both faculty and students have become involved with teaching and learning connected to our two local communities. The campus has begun to take on a leadership role in facilitating discussion and cooperation between our two communities. The community has begun to see the campus as a partner and community member interested in collaborating to address community issues and concerns consistent with its teaching and learning mission.

◇ **Communication.** More individuals are actively involved in and better informed about campus initiatives. Collaboration and interaction between groups expands the information available, changing the way decisions are made with the breaking down of silos. All constituencies are being valued for the expertise they bring, not the positions they hold.

◇ **Program review, resource allocation, and accountability.** The strategic plan called for all units to develop unit strategic plans, which assures that their efforts are focused on campus mission and objectives. The Strategic Planning process provides the framework for program self-study, assessment, and review. Periodic program review begins with the strategic plan and an assessment of how well the unit has met its mission and accomplished its objectives through the assessment of measurable outcomes. Our academic units undergo such a review every five years, at which time they will also review and revise as appropriate their strategic plan. Programs provide annual reports on strategic plan outcomes. The annual report, as well as the five year comprehensive program review, are reviewed by the Committee on Academic Planning, and form the basis for resource recommendations made by the Committee to the Provost. The Council in its oversight function monitors progress on the part of the six planning groups in meeting University mission and objectives.

◇ **Strategic direction.** The Strategic Planning Process provides the campus with a roadmap guiding all decision making. The campus initiates, evaluates, and reports with constant reference to, and justification provided by, the strategic plan.

- **Chancellor search.** It would turn out that the planning process was undertaken as the University went through an unanticipated change in leadership. As the finishing touches were put on the Strategic Plan, and it made its way through the campus approval process, an interim Chancellor was appointed followed by a new Chancellor who joined the campus in July of 1998. Though not anticipated when planning began, the strategic plan became a critical tool in the search and screen process for the Chancellor. The campus had articulated its vision, and was committed to finding a Chancellor who could support its newly adopted mission and objectives and lead the campus in its implementation. The campus had invested significant time and energy in the planning process, and was not about the start that process over again with a new chancellor. The strategic plan assisted in identifying a chancellor who was a good match for the campus.

Conclusion

Change in any organization is a slow process. There are always those who resist change, as well as resist planning. The key element to long-term planning is that whatever plan emerges, it must be taken seriously. Commitment to the plan and its implementation must come from top campus leadership, and the strategic plan must be at the forefront of all significant campus initiatives, or the plan will be ignored. Linkages must be constantly highlighted between the plan and initiatives taken at the department and university level. One of the most important lessons learned is that an effective and collaborative planning process has the potential to have a positive impact on the campus as much as the strategic directions that make up the substance of the plan.

Ronald M. Singer is Associate Vice Chancellor for Planning, Budget, and Resource Allocation at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

John M. Ostheimer is Provost and Vice Chancellor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Esther Letven is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extended Services at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Art Dudycha is a Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Significant Planning/ Significant Results

James P. Colman

A surprising number of higher education institutions have never taken the time to develop formal processes for long-term and short-term strategic planning. To be sure, planning is done at various levels within most institutions; but the planning, in many instances, never extends to the development of a planning structure in which the entire institution participates. This deficiency can produce significant concerns as institutions approach accreditation. There are ways to address the problem, and sharing some of these methods is the intent of this paper.

The Importance of Long- and Short-Term Strategic Planning

As the new millennium begins, academic institutions are faced with significant challenges such as:

- changing attitudes toward higher education in general and teaching methods in particular
- expanding electronic capabilities and their influences on educational methodologies
- exploding information resources
- funds allocation
- growing demand for new academic offerings
- increasing pressure to participate in distributed learning
- heightened job-market expectations
- decreasing time between major changes academically, culturally, technologically, etc.

Answering these challenges requires specific and intentional strategic planning if institutions hope to maintain their relevance to students, regardless of their age, and developing a viable strategic planning process requires the input of the entire institution. The success, welfare, and continuance of the institution is directly tied to the efforts of all concerned parties.

Before continuing, it is important to establish the difference between *strategic planning* and *tactical planning.* Strategic planning is positioning the institution appropriately and realistically. That is, strategic planning helps to chart a direction that matches the mission and objectives of the institution with its strengths, aptitudes, and potentials. Tactical planning, on the other hand, is implementing the priorities suggested by the positioning of the institution. In other words, tactical planning is the blueprint for accomplishing the strategic plan. Unfortunately, institutions lose their effectiveness when they spend most of their time on tactical planning and not much time on strategic planning. The result is that institutions expend all their energy doing "things" without any real goal or rationale behind their efforts. Tactical planning will always happen—it is the result of the day-to-day work environment of an academic institution. Planners, however, need to push their thinking up a level and begin to consciously evaluate specific rationale and directions, which can only result from a clear planning philosophy.

A Philosophy of Planning

Developing a viable strategic planning philosophy must include several variables:

- a foundation in the institution's purpose (mission, and objectives)
- an evaluation of environmental uncertainties (opportunities and challenges)
- an understanding of available future alternatives (decisions and choices)

Through planning, an institution attempts to avoid surprises while, at the same time, anticipating developments and maintaining flexibility to take advantage of sudden opportunities. A philosophy of strategic planning that increases the probability of successfully accomplishing this goal should include the following attributes.

- ◇ **Frequent.** Planning efforts must occur frequently. Five-year planning cycles are simply too long given the accelerated pace of change in academics. One- or two-year cycles provide a much greater possibility for response to opportunity.
- ◇ **Comprehensive.** Planning efforts should address facilities, programs, personnel, budgeting, marketing, etc.
- ◇ **Participatory.** For greatest success, planning should encourage every staff and faculty member to contribute ideas and suggest innovations. This promotes a sense of ownership and consensus-building. Planning allows personnel to help create organizational vision while assisting leadership in articulating the vision.
- ◇ **Proactive.** Planning should assume a progressive posture, stimulating dreams, creativity, and enthusiasm.
- ◇ **Balanced.** Planning should maintain a focus and purpose by building assumptions and projections on the organizational mission and objectives, but its proactive stance provides flexibility and opportunity for change. Together, continuity and change contribute to managed stability.
- ◇ **Quality-focused.** Planning should provide a forum in which personnel can consider more than organizational survival. The planning process is a vehicle for staff and faculty contributions to students, society, and the health and vitality of the institution. Because planning is comprehensive, it enables the administration to coordinate the achievements of individuals into qualitatively superior programs.

One Institution's Planning Model

With the previously defined philosophy in place, Cedarville College has attempted to design a strategic planning model that clearly identifies the most promising directions for the institution. Here is a brief synopsis of the model.

Cedarville College is composed of five divisions: Academic, Business, Christian Ministries, Development, Enrollment Management, and Student Services. Each division is responsible for the preparation of a yearly planning document that focuses two to three years into future. This time frame was chosen since in any given year, the budget for the following year is already in preparation and the planning for that year is already to the implementation phase. For example, in fiscal year 1999-2000 we are preparing the budget for 2000-2001 and planning for 2001-2003.

The Director of Planning sends each division planning guidelines that will help them identify needs or opportunities and the resources that are required to correct or pursue them. The vice presidents are free to design the planning process for their divisions in any way they choose. The end result is a divisional planning document that outlines strategic priorities for the next two years. These documents are submitted to the Strategic Planning Committee, which is composed of a representative from each division, three at-large members, and the Planning Director.

The goal of the Planning Committee is to synthesize the six divisional planning documents into one cohesive institutional plan. The committee seeks to evaluate and prioritize the divisional issues, needs, and opportunities identified within the documents and to formulate suggested responses based upon institutional planning priorities.

The final planning document is sent to the Administrative Council, comprised of the President and the six vice presidents. While the planning document is not binding upon the Council, it provides an important source of input for strategic decisions.

A key element in the success of our strategic planning is a sub-group called the Futures Committee. This committee works throughout the year to scan electronic and hardcopy media searching for trends that might indicate future threats to or opportunities for the institution. The committee submits a report containing its findings in the areas of human resources, higher education management, distance education, information technology, economic forecasts, church/religion, government, job market, and students to the Planning Committee. The report is included with the final strategic planning document and is given to all department and division heads as a resource for their next planning efforts.

Significant Results

The yearly planning document is thoroughly reviewed by the Administrative Council of Cedarville College and is influential at two important points during each academic year. First, one portion of the planning document outlines reiterates and updates current institutional planning priorities. The Administrative Council uses these priorities as a point for reference for prioritizing divisional planning objectives and as a framework for promoting strategic planning initiatives.

Second, the planning document serves as a primary resource for yearly budget decisions. As the President, vice presidents, and deans determine the budget allocations for 2001-2002, they will heavily rely on the information and priorities outlined in the 1999-2000 planning document. This is especially true when it comes to decisions concerning efforts to start new programs or hire new faculty.

A strong trait of the planning design described above is that it does not eliminate flexibility. As important opportunities arise, the institution can still take advantage of them while maintaining a connection with its long-term goals.

Summary

Strategic planning is vitally important to academic institutions as they face a host of challenges. Effective planning requires a clear philosophy that is rooted in the mission and objectives of the institution. The planning philosophy at Cedarville College has allowed the institution to foster an environment that encourages progress through participation. As all constituents of the institution participate, the end result is a long-range plan that significantly affects the decision-making processes of the campus while allowing for quick responses to positive or negative changes.

James P. Colman is Director of Strategic Planning at Cedarville College in Ohio.

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 4

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement: Case Studies

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Assessment Measures Leading to More Effective Assessment Programs

Debra K. Cartwright
Candace C. Young

State legislatures and accreditation committees have made the inclusion of assessment activities a necessity for every campus. Significant anxiety exists on campuses across the country regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of their assessment programs. Research has demonstrated that the knowledge of what other campuses are doing in terms of assessment and the subsequent normative pressures provide an effective motivator for enhanced assessment activities as institutions discover the richness of other campus assessment programs (Cartwright, 1998). This paper will share information about the assessment measures used by campuses in the North Central accreditation region. The results will be further analyzed by Carnegie Foundation classifications and levels of campus integration of assessment information into decision-making processes.

Sample and Measures

The primary source of data for this study was a questionnaire distributed to Senior Academic Officers at 786 public and private universities and community colleges accredited by the North Central Association. Individuals from 492 campuses provided information about their assessment programs–representing a 62.6% response rate. All 19 states were represented.

The data were divided into three groups based on Carnegie Foundation classifications. Group A represents campuses that fall into the Research I and II and Doctoral I and II categories, group B includes campuses in the categories of Master's Comprehensive I and II and Baccalaureate I and II, and group C contains the Community Colleges or Associate of Arts campuses.

A five-question, five-point Likert scale determined the levels of integration for the different campuses. Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements below regarding assessment activities on their campuses.

1. Assessment data are integrated into the budgeting process at our institution.
2. Assessment data are integrated into the planning process at our institution.
3. Assessment data are communicated to the campus community.
4. Assessment data are used in periodic program reviews.
5. Assessment data are used in making campus decisions.

Rationale for Multiple Measures and Diffusion

A recurring theme throughout much of the assessment literature is that decisions about programmatic and instructional change should be based on multiple measures rather than a single indicator of a problem. Multiple measures are important for several reasons. First, having multiple measures, such as tests, surveys, skill assessment, and portfolios, provides information from different perspectives and at different times in the student's tenure. Second, through experience, faculty and administrators realize that no one indicator can furnish a complete picture. Different types of learning and skill development need to be assessed in different ways using distinct types of assessment measures. Third, multiple measures improve faculty acceptance of the information. If one indicator, such as a test or a student survey, indicates a problem, the initial faculty response is to be critical of the measure or the source. However, when several different measures identify the same problem area, it is much harder to ignore the information.

After experimenting with various measures, the acceptance and use of the successful assessment measures often begins to spread across a campus. The diffusion may occur by administrative mandate, faculty senate mandate, or voluntary diffusion. How it occurs is not as important at this stage as the fact that the process is occurring across campus. For this research, measures were identified as being diffused if they were used by more than 75% of the programs on campus.

Table 1 – Diffusion of Assessment Measures Used

Measures	Not Used	Used in 1-25% of Programs	Used in 26-50% of Programs	Used in 51-75% of Programs	Used in 76-100% of Programs
Standardized Exams	7.8	53.2	17.4	7.6	14.0
Comprehensive Exams	14.2	41.1	16.8	12.0	15.9
Capstone Course	13.8	36.7	20.5	13.4	15.5
Portfolios	6.8	59.1	21.3	7.2	5.5
Alumni Surveys	5.7	32.1	19.1	13.8	29.1
Employer Surveys	11.6	44.8	18.3	9.7	15.6
Student Surveys	3.0	24.7	15.2	13.7	43.3
Program Review	3.6	11.4	12.7	9.9	62.3
Writing Assessment	7.7	33.8	19.2	12.6	26.7
Interviews	20.0	55.9	13.3	5.7	5.2

Numbers represent the percent of the sample responding

Results

Table 1 provides an overview of the measures included in the questionnaire and the resulting responses. Student surveys and program review were the two assessment measures used most often. Not only were they the most frequently cited measures used, but they were also the most widely diffused.

Table 2 – Diffusion of Assessment Measures by Integration Level

Measures	Integration Level 1 (0-11)	Integration Level 2 (11-15)	Integration Level 3 (16-20)	Integration Level 4 (21-25)
Standardized Exams	4.2	8.1	15.4	20.0
Comprehensive Exams	8.7	12.1	16.3	25.3
Capstone Course	8.3	9.2	16.0	21.9
Portfolios	0	6.3	4.1	9.3
Alumni Surveys	20.8	22.3	25.1	55.4
Employer Surveys	4.2	9.7	14.4	34.7
Student Surveys	16.7	36.0	42.2	69.9
Program Review	47.8	49.5	66.2	77.6
Writing Assessment	8.3	25.7	23.8	40.0
Interviews / Focus Group	4.2	2.7	5.1	8.3

Numbers represent percent of the sample responding that the measure was used by >75% of the programs on campus.

The results regarding different levels of integration showed that campuses reporting higher levels of integration indicated the use of more assessment measures on their campuses and higher levels of diffusion on all of the measures. Campuses with the highest levels of integration (scoring 21 or higher on the 25-point scale) used an average of 8.9 measures, with high levels of diffusion. This is in contrast to campuses with the lowest levels of integration (scoring less than 11 on the 25-point scale) that used an average of 7.8 different measures with lower levels of diffusion. Table 2 shows the different levels of diffusion of measures exhibited by four levels of integration.

The types of measures diffused did vary depending on the Carnegie Foundation category. Table 3 depicts the usage and diffusion rates of different measures for the three Carnegie Foundation categories described above.

Table 3 – Usage and Diffusion of Assessment Measures by Carnegie Foundation Classification

	A*		B		C	
Measurement	**% Using**	**% Diffused**	**% Using**	**% Diffused**	**% Using**	**% Diffused**
Standardized Exams	94.6	5.4	93	11.9	90.6	18.2
Comprehensive Exams	89.2	5.4	82.9	9.2	88.8	26.6
Capstone Experience	100.0	15.8	97.9	24.3	67.6	3.8
Portfolios	97.4	10.5	97.1	5.8	87.5	4.2
Alumni Surveys	100.0	21.6	94.6	28.6	92.7	31.3
Employer Surveys	92.1	2.6	95.5	8.3	91.3	27
Student Surveys	100.0	44.7	96.2	42.1	97.4	44.6
Program Review	97.4	76.3	95.4	61.1	96.8	60.8
Writing Assessment	94.6	27	91.3	30.7	93.2	21.6
Interviews	89.2	2.7	86	6.4	70.6	4.3

*A = Research I, II, and Doctoral I and II, Carnegie Foundation Classifaction System
B = Master's Comprehensive I and II and Baccalaureate I and II
C = Associate of Arts

While a number of differences between groups can be identified in the above table only a subset of the differences in diffusion are statistically significant. The community college campuses are more likely to have diffused comprehensive exams and employer surveys as assessment measures than the other two categories. Yet, they are less likely to have diffused capstone courses, portfolio assessment, program review, and interviews or focus groups. These findings are most likely the result of the differences in mission, structure, and curriculum found at community colleges. These differences include a more hierarchical structure, more direct link to employers (because of vocational technology programs), and the focus on general education as opposed to majors.

We can also see differences in the level of integration based on Carnegie Foundation Classification. Table 4 demonstrates these differences. Except on the question that asks if assessment data are used in periodic program

Table 4 – Integration into Campus Decision-Making

Integration Measure	**All***	**A**	**B**	**C**
Assessment data are integrated into the budgeting process at our institution.	37.3	21.9	33.8	44.3
Assessment data are integrated into the planning process at our institution.	63.4	51.3	60.5	66.5
Assessment data are communicated to the campus community.	69.3	56.1	68.7	72.7
Assessment data are used in periodic program reviews.	75.8	85.0	76.1	73.7
Assessment data are used in making campus decisions.	52.4	39.0	52.4	55.2
Percent falling into highest integration level	16.5	15.0	14.5	19.2

* Numbers represent combined percentages of respondents indicating they either agree or strongly agree with the statement representing the conditions on their campus.

reviews, the community college campuses demonstrate higher levels of integration. They also have a larger percentage of respondents falling into the highest integration level.

Discussion

The results presented above point to the importance of using multiple measures and of having them diffused across a campus's programs. These findings are encouraging since most campuses indicated using multiple measures and moving toward greater levels of diffusion. Some caution needs to be expressed when interpreting the numbers because there was no requirement for the assessment to be used extensively in order to report usage. Therefore, these numbers would indicate the most optimistic picture. Campuses need to continue working toward greater usage. Having a comprehensive assessment system is associated with integration and use of assessment data in planning, budgeting, and decision-making on a campus. The results provided in Table 4 demonstrate the need for more campuses to enhance the use of their assessment data particularly for campus budgeting and decision-making, but continued improvement in the use of data in planning and program review are still important goals. Often collected data about student learning and satisfaction are not used in these important campus processes. Seventy-six percent of campuses report using assessment data in program reviews, but only 52% report using assessment data when making campus decisions.

Different types of assessment have advantages and disadvantages for reporting and use, and campuses need to consider these dimensions of assessment methods when they create and modify their assessment systems. Locally developed assessments such as comprehensive exams, capstone courses, interviews/focus groups, and portfolios have the potential for increased involvement by faculty and staff since they are often developed and implemented by multiple members of the campus community. However, they are very difficult to report effectively to other groups on the campus, to use for year to year comparisons of student work, and to communicate to state agencies and the legislature. When faculty members work together to develop and implement local assessments, they are likely to have important discussions about the goals and purposes of their programs, and the university as a whole. On the negative side, local instruments do not provide the campus with a means for benchmarking the performance of its students to students on other campuses.

Ironically, instruments that encourage high levels of campus involvement in development and implementation seem to pose greater challenges for meaningful reporting, and instruments that have reporting advantages usually provide fewer opportunities for faculty and staff involvement. Similarly, standardized instruments have the advantage of high levels of reliability when compared to locally developed assessments, but the local instruments are considered to fit the local curriculum better and assess skills not easily evaluated in a multiple choice format such as writing ability and critical thinking. Finally, standardized exams in the major field have the advantage of being based on a national panel's view of what is important for majors in the specified field of study and allowing students to determine if they are nationally competitive.

In addition to using multiple measures, campuses reporting high levels of use of assessment also report high levels of diffusion of assessment instruments across the campus. Dispersion of assessment instruments across the campus provides more chances for having consistent and multiple data points to review prior to any campus decision. Furthermore, campuses that have the same assessment methods in place across the institution have a common language of assessment for faculty, staff, and students. This shared language increases the chances for campus-wide dialogue based on data about student performance and for the development of an assessment culture (Young and Knight, 1993). Campus planning using assessment is also greatly facilitated by having common measures across the campus that can be used for university-wide performance indicators and compared from year to year.

Conclusion

As campuses find they must assess to meet accreditation and accountability standards, they must determine whether to create assessment systems that go beyond compliance. In the data analyzed for this study, 16.5 percent of campuses reported high enough levels of use of assessment data in campus planning and decision making processes to be categorized as going beyond compliance to integration (See Cartwright and Young, 1999). Integrating assessment into campus processes is associated with 1) the use of multiple measures of assessment and 2) diffusion of assessments across the campus. No one type of assessment can effectively meet the needs of assessing for multiple purposes. When data from different types of instruments reinforce each other in terms of identifying campus strengths and weaknesses, campus decisions can be made with much higher levels of evidence. With a carefully designed, multiple instrument assessment system an institution puts itself in the position to use assessment to demonstrate accountability and to improve student learning and ultimately the institution. However, even with the best possible set of assessment data, it takes effective leadership to provide incentives and expectations that the data will be used to plan, budget, and make decisions.

References

Cartwright, Debra K. 1998. *Strategic responsiveness to institutional pressures: Resistance and internalization strategies in response to conflicting institutional pressures regarding assessment in higher education.* Unpublished dissertation. University of Missouri-Columbia.

Cartwright, Debra K., and Candace C. Young. 1999. *Assessment of student outcomes: Compliance or a strategy of differentiation? Proceedings from the tenth annual symposium on the marketing of higher education.* Chicago: American Marketing Association.

Young, Candace C., and Michael E. Knight. 1993. Providing leadership for organizational change. In *Making a dfference: outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education,* ed. Trudy W. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Debra K. Cartwright is Assistant Professor, Business Administration at Truman State College in Kirksville Missouri.

Candace C. Young is Professor of Political Science Administration at Truman State College in Kirksville Missouri.

A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Student Assessment

Ronald D. Reed
Rolf C. Enger

The chairperson for the May 1999 Evaluation Team Visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy termed our overall assessment program "marvelous" during the exit session. Affirming this, the Final Report on the Team Visit said one of the Academy's strengths was that our "Assessment program which focuses on the whole individual serves as a model for other institutions of higher education." The Academy is developing models and instruments to assess student performance in academic, athletic, military, and character-development areas. The athletic and military aspects of student performance may be of interest to few other institutions. However, our multi-dimensional view of assessment includes two aspects of more general interest: 1) accepting the challenge to pursue student development in multiple areas, and 2) integrating multiple measures of student performance within and across developmental areas.

Building a Culture of Assessment

The Academy's assessment program has evolved steadily over the last decade. Government emphasis on principles of Total Quality Management provided both a conceptual framework and an opportunity for the institution to shift from a traditional *faculty-teaching orientation* to a *student-learning* or *outcomes orientation* in 1990. General acceptance of a new learning paradigm led us to increase our focus on educational outcomes and their assessment, as well as assessment of total student development. In concert, the Dean of the Faculty created the Directorate of Education to coordinate and facilitate assessment efforts. Furthermore, academic departments established programs to distribute end-of-course critique data and otherwise manage assessment. Regular, active participation in national and regional assessment conferences and programs helped energize, inform, and enrich the development of the Academy's assessment program. Interdepartmental efforts also have sought to share "lessons learned" or ideas for improved measurement and assessment techniques, as well as conduct joint faculty development efforts.

One recent faculty initiative was conducted through an interdisciplinary Meta-Assessment Process Action Team. This team compiled an extensive inventory of organizational assessment, throughout the faculty and beyond, during the spring of 1998. The report was shared with all Department Heads and senior faculty and staff in a 1998 Team Report. The Directorate of Education subsequently prepared an Assessment Catalog based on this report. This Catalog is discussed more later.

Dimensions of Student Development: General Education and Other Purposes

For the Academy, there is a clear mandate for multi-dimensional student development that dates from early planning documents for the Academy in 1948 and continues through current mission statements. In addition to 15-21 semester hours of academics, students regularly participate in athletic, leadership, military training, and character development programs.

The NCA's General Institutional Requirements define "general education" for institutions of higher education:

> General education is "general" in several clearly identifiable ways: it is not directly related to a student's formal technical, vocational, or professional preparation; it is part of every student's course of study, regardless of his or her area of emphasis, and it is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that every educated person should possess. (NCA Handbook of Accreditation, 2nd edition, pg 23)

One might argue that good character, for example, should be a natural part of intellectual concepts or attitudes that higher education can foster or that every "educated person should possess." However, for our self-study, we found it more appropriate to combine professional military training, athletics, and character development as "other purposes" related to our mission and NCA's discussion of Criterion Three:

> The Commission recognizes that almost all institutions of higher education have a variety of purposes to fulfill other than those directly related to teaching and learning. Those "other purposes" might relate directly to public expectations of the institution or to specific commitments to the sponsoring or funding entity. (NCA Handbook of Accreditation, 2nd edition, pg 41)

Given such "other purposes," how much can institutions formalize their goals, programs, and assessment for broader student development (e.g., versus simply establishing an environment in which students can pursue broader personal development if they so desire)? At the Academy, as a result of extensive internal discussion and debate during the past decade, each program now has clearly defined objectives and agreed upon outcomes. Assessment is integral to each of these programs. Since these programs include a common core experience for all students, several institution-wide instruments have been developed (like the Academy graduation survey) that apply a common assessment strategy to each program. This has several advantages. Such broad instruments help leadership assess institutional mission accomplishment. Common instruments help officials assess balance among programs and identify areas needing greater emphasis. Common assessment instruments also tend to be a more efficient use of student time and indirectly help students see linkages among various programs. Finally, shared assessment encourages shared dialogue among mission elements or organizations.

Establishing and Linking Outcomes

The Academy's commitment to promote student development in multiple areas is codified in carefully worded outcomes. For example, our commitment to general education most clearly is reflected in our Educational Outcomes, supported through core and major's academic coursework and student research. In 1993 the Academy established a set of seven Educational Outcomes:

- Officers who possess breadth of integrated, fundamental knowledge in the basic sciences, engineering, the humanities, and social sciences, and depth of knowledge in an area of concentration of their choice
- Officers who can frame and resolve ill-defined problems
- Officers who can communicate effectively
- Officers who are independent learners
- Officers who can work effectively with others
- Officers who are intellectually curious
- Officers who can apply their knowledge and skills to the unique tasks of the military profession.

Together, these outcomes help define and support the fundamental concepts that have formed a basis for the origins and evolution of the Academy curriculum as one vital pillar of cadet development. Faculty discussions and other documents have elaborated on each of the Educational Outcomes to clarify and expand their interpretation. Much faculty effort over the last five years has been focused on exploring and assessing these outcomes. Our long-range educational goals include better integration of these outcomes into our curriculum so that the total cadet experience supports their achievement.

The Academy sent the NCA a *Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement* in 1995. The Academy subsequently elaborated on or modified several of the goals identified there, but it generally satisfied the intended assessment process. However, two elements of this plan were judged too costly or too ill-defined at this time, and they were superseded by other efforts. The first element concerned "levels of performance" (i.e., rubrics) for all seven Educational Outcomes, which were to have been completed and implemented by 1998. The second, related element was that by 1998, "each department should have its own formal plan for using the institutionally-defined levels of performance to assess performance on each (of the) Educational Outcomes among seniors majoring in that field of study." In the process of doing assessment, the faculty learned that the cost of such a comprehensive approach was much greater than imagined. As a result, rubrics for only three of the educational outcomes were developed, and only a few departments have formal plans for using them in institutional and local assessment. Instead, the Academy emphasized local activity, as well as more global efforts (an Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group, the Meta-Assessment Process Action Team, graduate surveys, a Class of 1998 exit survey, and faculty convocations to better define future approaches to action on educational outcomes). These efforts largely superseded the ambitious or somewhat naïve intentions reflected in the 1995 Plan, but still supported the overall goal of using assessment data to improve performance. These activities are now placed in the context of a revised assessment plan that was discussed in our Self-Study Report for NCA.

Just as there have been difficulties in assessing all Educational Outcomes, it has been difficult to frame outcomes and establish metrics in Character Development areas. The Academy defines character as one's moral compass, the sum of those qualities of moral excellence that move a person to do the right thing despite pressures to the contrary. To guide character development an Academy commission established eight Character Development Outcomes and published a strategy to achieve them. The outcomes became incorporated into the mission of a Center for Character Development. As summarized in these outcomes, the Academy's objective is to graduate officers who:

- have forthright integrity and voluntarily decide the right thing to do and do it;
- are selfless in service to the country, the Air Force, and their subordinates;
- are committed to excellence in the performance of their personal and professional responsibilities;
- respect the dignity of all human beings;
- are decisive, even when facing high risk;
- take full responsibility for their decisions;
- have the self-discipline, stamina, and courage to do their duty well under even the extreme and prolonged conditions of national defense; and
- appreciate the significance of spiritual values and beliefs to their own character development and that of the community.

An Academy Character Development Strategy involves achieving the outcomes by engaging cadets in a character development process across the Academy. This process links moral dialogue to moral action within the context of the cadets' real lives. It requires that all faculty and staff become skilled moral discussants as well as role models. Together, faculty and staff comprise a web of character influence that extends into the classroom and beyond, encompassing the whole cadet experience.

Overall, although we have not necessarily converged on common instruments or clearly defined rubrics for each outcome, the faculty and staff's level of energy for and commitment to assessment is propelling this institution toward increased awareness and enhanced effectiveness.

Assessment Catalog Approach and a Spectrum of Instruments

Seeking to achieve student development in multiple areas requires multiple instruments for assessment. Despite the otherwise glowing commentary by the Evaluation Team, the Academy has encountered some problems in assessment. Among these problems are integration of effort across mission organizations and finding those assessment instruments with the most "value added." One attempt to address such problems was our development of an Assessment Catalog. First created in 1998, the catalog provides an at-a-glance summary of assessment efforts related to cadet academic achievement, performance of Academy graduates in the Air Force, and performance of the departments and agencies in their educational mission. The catalog has been widely embraced by our faculty and administrators as a useful document. Our hope is that over time it will continue to help us accomplish the following objectives:

- Facilitate cross-flow of assessment ideas between and among departments and agencies
- Identify internal and external sources of assessment data
- Permit easy identification of qualitative and quantitative assessment methods

- Categorize assessment instrument types
- Track the currency and frequency of use of assessment methods
- Identify decisions based on assessment data
- Catalog judgments about the utility of each assessment method (low, moderate, high)
- Identify knowledgeable points of contact within the departments and agencies

The catalog is organized by academic department and staff agency. Each entry includes a brief description of the assessment technique, an identification of the source of the data and the frequency with which it is collected, the type of assessment technique used, a summary of decisions that have been based on the data, an assessment of the utility of the assessment technique, and a point of contact within the department or staff agency. We found it difficult at first to get some organizations to define specific decisions based on their assessment instruments; however, this information was vital to the self-study and to reinforcing the importance of fact-based decision making here. The following is a list of the types of assessment techniques included in the catalog:

- AR: Archived Records
- BO: Behavioral Observation
- CT: Commercial Test
- ER: Evaluation or Review
- FG: Focus Group
- I: Interview
- LT: Local Test
- P: Portfolio
- SQ: Survey or Questionnaire

Appendix A is a brief excerpt from the catalog, based on a portion of the information provided by our Department of Biology in 1998.

At first glance, the entire 83-page catalog can seem somewhat overwhelming. To streamline the document, some have suggested removing techniques that are assigned a "low" utility rating. As the catalog matures, that may indeed happen. However, others argue that the exhaustive nature of the catalog is one of its greatest strengths. Quality assessment requires a multi-dimensional approach using a variety of indicators that ideally converge to a common conclusion. For example, the research literature on student course and instructor critiques is filled with warnings against using the data as the sole basis for evaluating faculty performance. Thus, otherwise low-utility indicators can play an important role when they either confirm or contradict the conclusions drawn from other assessment instruments. The debate continues.

Lessons Learned

- The Academy has a clear mandate for multi-dimensional student development. Thus, in addition to academics, students regularly participate in athletic, leadership, military training, and character development programs. Assessment is integral to each of these programs. To date, it has been the most difficult to frame outcomes and establish metrics in Character Development areas. However, all these areas offer challenges as we seek to provide general education and meet our "other purposes."
- Although admittedly important to assess the accomplishment of desired outcomes, finding or developing appropriate instruments has, in many cases, been very difficult. For example, we tried to establish "levels of performance" (i.e., rubrics) for all seven faculty Educational Outcomes that could be used as an objective measure of outcome accomplishment. The task of developing and achieving consensus for such rubrics turned out to be nearly impossible. To date, we have rubrics for only three outcomes and only a few departments have formal plans for using such rubrics in institutional and local assessment.

- ◇ The quality of education and training programs at the Academy has significantly improved as a result of the institution's increased emphasis on assessment. Even the process of defining, debating, and facing challenges in these areas can add to a Culture of Assessment.
- ◇ No single instrument has emerged as the assessment "solution." Rather, our success is a direct consequence of a multi-dimensional approach.
- ◇ Over the years, regular, active participation in national and regional assessment conferences and programs has helped energize, inform, and enrich the development of the Academy's assessment program. Many of the assessment strategies we currently employ were learned from colleagues outside the Academy.
- ◇ Interdepartmental efforts to share "lessons learned" or ideas for improved measurement and assessment techniques have been valuable. In 1998 we created the widely embraced Assessment Catalog to facilitate this process.

Ronald D. Reed is Professor and Head of the Department of Biology at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado.

Rolf C. Enger is Director of Education at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado.

A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Student Assessment

Appendix A

Label	Description	Data Source	Type	Data / Frequency	Decision	Utility	Point of Contact
(AAALAC) Assoc. for Assessment & Accreditation of Lab Animal Care	Standards for laboratory animal care strictly monitored and enforced for research and educational animal use	External	ER	Fall 1996	Appropriate use of animals in the classroom and lab: items corrected and procedures changed as needed	High	IACUC Chair
		Other		Every 3 Years			
(CAAP) Science & Reasoning Test	National standardized test used to measure critical thinking among science undergraduate students	Internal	CT	Spring 1998	Baseline assessment in 1998-99; may be used to modify Biology 215 curriculum in future years	Moderate	Deputy for Research
		Cadets		Annual			
Anchored Exams	We are just beginning to develop anchored exams in several courses to monitor trends; may become more significant in the future	Internal	LT	Fall 1998	Trends monitored for areas needing emphasis in curriculum and testing; permitted the evaluation of new instructors and/or textbooks	Low	Deputy for Research
		Cadets		Semi-Annual			
Department Head with All Senior Majors	The Department Head meets with all biology majors during their senior year to get open and honest feedback on the department, our courses, and instructors	Internal	I	Fall 1998	Adjustments to schedules, course sequences, loads, etc. made in response to feedback; resulted in changing Biology 480 from 2- to 1-hour course and purchase of student-support equipment items	High	Department Head
		Cadets		Annual			
Department Head & Mentor Classroom Visits	Feedback on course content and faculty development for improving teaching standards	Internal	BO	Fall 1998	Collegial atmosphere and interaction improves all department members' skills via formative feedback	Moderate	Department Head & Mentors
		Faculty		Annual			
End-of-Course Critiques	Used to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained as perceived by cadets; also, perceived instructor effectiveness	Internal	SQ	Fall 1998	Changes to course made to achieve Educational Outcomes; supported 1998 changes to Biology 215 curriculum and 1999 restructure of Biology 480	High	Deputy for Academic Development
		Cadets		Semi-Annual			

Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning: The Evolving Role of Assessment at a Research University

Mary E. Huba

Introduction: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning

> The current view in higher education is that we should focus on student learning rather than teaching in order to improve students' college experiences (e.g., Cross, 1998). The reason is not so much that our current approach is "broken" and in need of "fixing," but rather that we are underperforming (Engelkemeyer & Brown, 1998). We are failing to use existing knowledge about learning and our own institutional resources to produce graduates who leave the institution ready to succeed in the information age (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 3).

Focusing on learning rather than teaching requires that faculty and administrators change the dominant paradigm within which they view their institutions and their roles within them. Changing to a learning paradigm requires thinking differently about how people learn, about the how teachers and students contribute to the learning environment, and about the relationship between assessment and learning.

Many prominent leaders in higher education have endorsed the need for a paradigm that focuses on learning (Astin, 1985, 1993; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Cross, 1993, 1996; Erickson, 1984; Plater, 1998). In addition, the Joint Task Force on Student Learning appointed by the American Association for Higher Education, the American College Personnel Association, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators has developed a set of propositions about learning that can be used by all members of a campus community to guide the transition to a learning environment (1998a, 1998b).

- **The teacher-centered paradigm.** In the teacher-centered paradigm, teaching is viewed as the process of transmitting knowledge from professors to students. Students learn by passively receiving information, and they acquire knowledge outside the context in which it is used. The professor is the primary information-giver as well as the primary evaluator, and students are viewed as the only learners in the classroom.

  In this paradigm, the culture is competitive and individualistic. Assessment focuses on getting right answers, and assessment and teaching are considered to be separate activities. Assessment is carried out for the purpose of monitoring learning, and the objectively scored test is the typical assessment tool. This means that many of the skills and abilities that we desire in graduates—the ability to communicate, solve problems, work on a team, and use discipline-related knowledge effectively—can be assessed only indirectly.

- **The learner-centered paradigm.** In contrast, in the learner-centered paradigm, students are actively involved in constructing their knowledge. They participate in activities that require them to gather information, synthesize it, and integrate it with their skills in the areas of inquiry, communication, team work, critical thinking, and problem solving. These activities require students to address enduring and emerging issues and problems in real life contexts. The teaching-learning environment is a cooperative, collaborative, and supportive culture in which professors and students learn together. The professor coaches and facilitates student learning, and professors and students evaluate learning together.

In the learner-centered environment, assessment is used to promote and diagnose learning rather than simply to monitor it. Desired learning is assessed directly through papers, projects, performances, portfolios, and the like. The emphasis is on generating better questions and learning from errors rather than on getting right answers. The standards against which student work is judged are high, and they are known by students as well as professors.

Virtually all of the practices that characterize learner-centered environments were endorsed by the Education Commission of the States (1995, 1996) in their report Making Quality Count in Undergraduate Education. The authors assert that quality begins with an organizational structure that values high expectations, respect for diverse talents and learning styles, and emphasis on the early years of study. A quality curriculum requires coherence in learning, synthesizing experiences, ongoing practice of learned skills, and the integration of education and experience. Finally, they point out, quality instruction incorporates active learning, assessment and prompt feedback, collaboration, adequate time on task, and out-of-class contact with faculty.

◇ **Shifting paradigms.** Fostering a change in paradigms is a formidable task that becomes more daunting as the complexity of the institution increases. Although it is possible for individual professors to shift paradigms on their own, the process works best when the entire institutional culture supports and rewards it. "In this type of setting all faculty and staff are potentially focused on changing to a learner-centered approach (Engelkemeyer & Brown, 1998; Kuh, 1998), and structures and processes facilitate the shift" (Huba and Freed, 2000).

> At the individual level, shifting to the Learning Paradigm means a new way of thinking. Learning to think in a new way is somewhat like learning a foreign language.... One has not made the shift to the new Learning Paradigm unless one thinks within it rather than about...
>
> At the organizational level, the shift...involves two related but distinct dimensions or shifts. First the mission shifts from providing instruction (read, essentially, "lecturing") to producing student learning.... A second shift...is the shift to operating as a learning organization...
>
> This is no ordinary change. This is a transformation.... An organization is not transformed unless its fundamental structures and processes are significantly altered (Barr, 1998, p. 19).

Iowa State University

Iowa State University is a Research I, Ph.D. granting institution that enrolls approximately 25,000 students in eight colleges. Although all students must earn credit in library skills (one credit), freshman writing (six credits), and diversity and internationalization (six credits), there is no campus-wide core curriculum.

Iowa State's assessment plan was approved by the North Central Association in 1994, and its fledgling assessment program was affirmed by the North Central team who visited our campus in 1996 during our 10-year reaccreditation site visit. Oversight for assessment currently rests with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, a new position that was created and filled in the fall of 1998. The university's Assessment Coordinator is a faculty member who provides leadership for assessment on a half-time basis. Along with the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, she reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs.

The Evolving Role of Assessment at Iowa State University

In the early 1990s at Iowa State University, assessment was conceptualized within the teacher-centered paradigm as an initiative that could be integrated into the existing university environment. Initially, the goal was to meet North Central Association and Board of Regents requirements by focusing on using assessment for improvement. We attempted to base our program on principles of good practice in assessment (American Association of Higher Education, 1992), and we used the North Central characteristics of successful assessment programs as a guide (North Central Association-Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, 1994-1996). We were primarily interested in promoting compliance, but we believed that compliance should lead to the generation of useful information to guide decision making about teaching and curriculum.

◇ **Early practices.** In promoting compliance, we required that colleges and departments submit annual reports in which they addressed key aspects of assessment (i.e., intended learning outcomes, experiences leading to outcomes, measures, results, and changes based on results). Furthermore, we tried to embed assessment in the procedures through which the institution does business (e.g., program review and catalog revision). We took a low-key but persistent approach in which we accepted progress where it occurred and provided patient encouragement in areas lacking the necessary ingredients for success (e.g., stable leadership, committed administrators, a sufficient knowledge base, or a willingness to change). Over the years, we have seen progress in the units that initially lagged behind as their leadership has stabilized or external forces like specialized accreditation have added discipline-based pressure for assessment. In some cases, progress in the units that were initially most successful has slowed, and steps are being devised to revive it. All in all, the institution as a whole has continued to move forward in assessment.

◇ **Institutional changes.** During the time that we were implementing our assessment plan, other changes took place at the institution that reflected an increasing emphasis on learning. Learning communities (Cross, 1998) sprang up, and a faculty development program in which participants reflect on teaching, learning, and modifying their practice in the classroom was established (Licklider, Schnelker, & Fulton, 1997).

A dialogue about our teaching mission emerged from annual faculty conferences held in the spring, and this dialogue led to a revision of our promotion and tenure document. In order to advance in rank and be tenured, faculty must now provide evidence that they engage in scholarship in their teaching and outreach, as well as in their research. Compared to the former practice of requiring excellence in only one area—typically research, this is a more holistic approach, one that honors teaching more visibly. When faculty engage in the scholarship of teaching (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999), they examine the effect of their practice on students and on learning, and they share what they learn with others.

In order to capitalize on the momentum generated by these events, a new administrative position, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, was established in 1998. Filling this position was the first step in initiating a new goal at Iowa State—the creation of a learner-centered educational environment.

◇ **A new role for assessment.** With all these changes, assessment has taken on a new role at the institution—it has become one of many tools for cultural change. Both the Assessment Coordinator and the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence report to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs. In a coordinated fashion all three individuals seek to help faculty shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, thereby creating a new paradigm on campus. The chief emphasis is no longer assessment; rather, it is learning.

College administrators are still held responsible for providing leadership in assessment in their colleges, but along with this, on a university-wide basis, good assessment is being folded into both learning communities and discussions about learning in faculty development programs. The university's strategic plan is being revised to focus on learning rather than teaching, and references to assessment in the plan address its supportive role in learning. The English Department, the Faculty Senate, and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs are jointly initiating a campus-wide discussion of students' communication skills, focusing on desired learning outcomes rather than on course requirements.

The Faculty Senate is developing its first strategic plan, and as a participant on the committee drafting the plan, the Assessment Coordinator is encouraging an emphasis on faculty ownership of issues related to learning, as well as assessment. Campus wide discussions of the meaning of the scholarship of teaching are being initiated, and through these discussions, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the synergistic relationships among teaching, learning, and assessing will emerge.

All of these events demonstrate that, in the six years since our assessment plan was approved, assessment has developed from a separate initiative to a key ingredient in cultural change. The assessment process is important not only because it provides data leading to improvement but also because it forces faculty and administrators to ask the ultimate question, "What are students learning?" Answering this question is the first step in shifting from the traditional teacher-centered paradigm to one that is learner-centered.

References

American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). 1992. *Principles of good practice for assessing student learning.* Washington, DC: AAHE Assessment Forum.

Astin, A. W. 1985. *Achieving educational excellence.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. 1993. *Assessment for excellence.* Phoenix: Oryx Press.

Barr, R. B. 1998. Obstacles to implementing the learning paradigm—What it takes to overcome them. *About Campus* September-October:18-25.

Barr, R. B., and J. Tagg, J. 1995. From teaching to learning: A new paradigm for undergraduate education. *Change* November-December:13-25.

Chickering, A. W., and Z. F. Gamson. 1987. Seven principles for good practice. *AAHE Bulletin* 39 March:3-7.

Cross, K. P. 1993. Involving faculty in TQM. *AACC Journal* February-March:15-20.

——. 1996. New lenses on learning. *About Campus* March-April: 4-9.

——. 1998. Why learning communities? Why now? *About Campus* July-August:4-11.

Education Commission of the States (ECS). 1995. Making quality count in undergraduate education. Denver: ECS.

——. 1996. What research says about improving undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin* April:5-8.

Engelkemeyer, S. W., and S. C. Brown. 1998. Powerful partnerships: A shared responsibility for learning. *AAHE Bulletin* October:10-12.

Erickson, S. C. 1984. *The essence of good teaching.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Huba, M. E., and J. E. Freed, J. E. 2000. *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning.* Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

Hutchings, P., and L. S. Shulman. 1999. The scholarship of teaching: New elaborations, new developments. *Change* September-October:11-15.

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Joint Task Force on Student Learning. 1998a. *Learning principles and collaborative action.* Washington, D.C.:AAHE.

——. 1998b. *Powerful partnerships: A shared responsibility for learning.* Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Association. <http://www.aahe.org>, <http://www.acpa.nche.edu>, or <http://www.naspa.org>.

Kuh, G. D. 1998. Lessons from the mountains. *About Campus* July-August:16-21.

Licklider, B. L., D. L. Schnelker, and C. Fulton. 1997. Revisioning faculty development for changing times: The foundation and framework. *Journal of Staff, Program, and Organizational Development,* 15(3):121-133.

North Central Association/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA/CIHE). 1994-1996. *Handbook of accreditation.* Chicago: NCA/CIHE.

Plater, W. M. 1998. So . . . Why aren't we taking learning seriously? *About Campus* November-December:9-14.

Mary E. Huba is Professor and Student Outcomes Assessment Coordinator at Iowa State University in Ames.

Teaching Reconnections: Assessment-Driven Institutional Renewal

Ronald R. Dowe
Mary Mahony

The assessment process at Wayne County Community College District has proven to be an invaluable tool for institutional and individual renewal. First, it enabled faculty members to reconnect with the missions established by their departments, disciplines, and programs, as well as with the college mission. In addition, the process became a "stealth" approach to faculty development as instructors joined in conversations about learning outcomes and effective teaching strategies. Finally, the assessment initiative provided an opportunity to establish or reestablish lines of communication among faculty and between departments and programs. Thus, assessment has provided the faculty with the means to create a campus culture that is centered around student success, as well as to develop a communications network dedicated to improving both the teaching and learning at the college.

Background

Many institutions experience similar challenges to those faced by our institution.

- Wayne County Community College opened its doors in 1967 expecting 2,000 students. More than 8,000 enrolled that first term. Over the next ten years, enrollment grew rapidly and by 1980, the college was the largest in the State of Michigan with full-time equivalent enrollment of over 16,000.
- From storefront, leased, and borrowed facilities, the college built five widely dispersed campuses. This exacerbated a traditional lack of faculty participation in decision-making, unclear lines of authority, and poor communication with faculty.
- Over the next 14 years, the college experienced numerous governance and management problems. By 1995, the college had had 12 presidents. The third president had stayed 10 years.
- Enrollment declines were equally dramatic during this period, and enrollment did not stabilize until the late 1980's at approximately 5,500 FTE's.
- More than 80 percent of the college's faculty were hired in the 1960s and 1970s.

These factors combined to isolate teachers, preventing discussion of vital educational issues related to student success.

Key Decisions

Early decisions, from 1996-1997, made faculty development a central strategy for addressing the issue of assessment, and transformed assessment into the driver of institutional change and renewal. A primary step involved making key decisions about the role of assessment in the faculty's activities. Many of these decisions were centered on soliciting and sustaining faculty involvement.

- Faculty need to own assessment. They cannot own what they do not understand. Assessment must be presented as a tool to benefit all, not a threat to faculty.
- No amount of external pressure alone can produce "motivation" to adopt new and sometimes demanding work. Faculty would simply do what they've always done when faced with such pressures—return to the classroom and ignore the "administrative" maelstrom outside their doors.
- Administration needs to be viewed as a partner in the assessment enterprise. It can best do this by providing the support and tools to accomplish both long-term and short-term tasks.
- Assessment requires that faculty change many practices that have been long embedded in their curricula and teaching. They require assistance in making these changes and must be given the opportunity to experiment.
- For assessment to take hold in the institution, we would have to identify faculty leadership and provide an opportunity for professional development in the practices and tools of assessment.

Tools

The following are some of the major initiatives that we have used in our faculty development strategy. Some are traditional faculty development activities. Others represent our belief that faculty development has at its core conversations among faculty about teaching and learning, and efforts have been made to provide such opportunities. All of these activities are "sponsored" by the college's Assessment Steering Committee. This sponsorship adds credibility and legitimacy to the committee's activities and identifies the committee as central to providing a continuing context for conversations on improving student learning. Faculty agreement has been solicited at every incremental step—from voluntary faculty participation on the steering committee and voluntary attendance at workshops to concurrence with departmental/discipline assessment activities and

1. **Sponsored workshops.** Since fall 1996, the Assessment Steering Committee has sponsored at least one workshop each term.
2. **Keynote speakers.** The Assessment Steering Committee has attempted to address faculty development through the use of keynote speakers for semi-annual all faculty convocations (see also below). Assessment has provided the focus and the rationale for these speakers.
3. **All faculty convocations; Assessment Day.** Aware of the fact that conversations are not possible if faculty cannot physically get together, the Assessment Steering Committee focused on intervening in the college's semi-annual "Faculty Organization Day."

   Because of the competing demands for pieces of the organization day by senior administration, union leadership, and departments, the Assessment Steering Committee decided to schedule a separate "Assessment Day," which was first held in the spring of 1999.
4. **Multiple communications devices.** These include the use of newsletters, posters, distributed data, coordinator and program portfolios, a periodic journal on "Best Practices," among others.
5. **Conference attendance.** The committee has been a conduit for travel to professional conferences, particularly the annual AAHE Assessment Conference. Not only has overall faculty attendance increased, there have also been six conference presentations by faculty and staff since late 1998.
6. **Classroom attendance projects.** The idea for individual faculty projects came as a follow-up to a workshop presented to faculty on Labor Day weekend, in August 1996, conducted by Barbara Walvoord of Notre Dame University. During the first year, some 15 faculty conducted pilot projects.
7. **Departmental meetings on assessment.** For our institution, where such meetings have not had a "professional" focus, assessment provided a theme for positive faculty interaction on teaching and learning issues. An essential strategy that we have employed has consisted in the use of "faculty assessment coordinators." These are release-time positions intended to help coordinate the work within departments/ disciplines/ programs. These faculty, by definition, are members of the Assessment Steering Committee. They have had the responsibility of convening meetings focused on assessment-related tasks and discussions.
8. **Mapping of core abilities.** The Assessment Steering Committee developed nine "core abilities" statements, operationalizing the faculty-adopted "Philosophy of General Education." They include expected competencies in communication, application of the methods of science, diversity, critical thinking, among others. Subse-

quently, a course analysis survey was conducted to map the core abilities across the curriculum. This ongoing activity continues to structure departmental and discipline instructional development and has served as a frame of reference for conversations about learning outcomes and teaching strategies.

9. **The Seven Principles of Good Practice.** As Martin Nemko has written, "…educational institutions are like motels: most faculty members have no idea what's going on in the next room" (in S. Hatfield, Ed., *The Seven Principles in Action: Improving Undergraduate Education;* Boltan, MA: Anker Publishing Co.; p. x). As an early activity that continues in discussion among faculty, the Assessment Steering Committee administered the "Faculty Inventory." "The Seven Principles" serve as another opportunity to foster instructional and organizational development.

Results

Many systematic institutional changes have taken place as the principles behind the assessment process are integrated into the teaching philosophy of faculty. The clearest evidence of institutional change is in

- **The sustained level of faculty participation.** Since 1996, approximately 45 faculty have actively participated on the Assessment Steering Committee. In a very real sense, almost all faculty within the institution have participated in assessment-related professional development activities.
- **The adoption by faculty of the "Philosophy of General Education" and the "Core Abilities."** For the first time in the institution's history, faculty agreed upon a statement of how they believed that general education is reflected in the curriculum. There is continuing interaction on the meaning of these statements and on appropriate measurements.
- **The systematic revision of syllabi across disciplines and programs to better reflect expected student outcomes.** Over the past two years, faculty have been engaged at the course, discipline, program, and departmental levels reviewing syllabi to better align them with the "Philosophy of General Education" and the "Core Abilities."
- **The continued administrative support for these faculty development activities.** The successful meeting of NCA requirements and the sustained level of faculty involvement have lent credibility and legitimacy to requests by the Assessment Steering Committee for funding of workshops, conference attendance, and other faculty convocations.
- **The new role our faculty now play in making presentations on their work.** Both the interaction of faculty from other institutions with our own in workshops sponsored by assessment and the learning that takes place by preparing presentations, both internal and external, provide further opportunities for faculty professional development. For faculty from an institution long maligned by its peers, this provides positive incentives for further personal and institutional development.

Accreditation History

In February 1997, Wayne County Community College District underwent a focused visit by its accrediting agency, the North Central Association. This focused visit was scheduled in 1992, the time of the college's last comprehensive accreditation. One of the items under focus was to be assessment.

From 1992 through 1996, the college had done little to prepare for the focused visit. A faculty committee was not identified until August 1996. At the time of the February focused visit, the college was told that it was one of only seven institutions within the North Central region that did not have an approved assessment plan.

The recommendations from the focused visit were harsh and, in retrospect, unrealistic:

- by August 1997 to submit a "monitoring report"
- by December 1997 to submit an "acceptable" assessment plan
- by June 1998 to submit a "progress report"
- by January 1999 to submit a second "progress report"

If any of these recommendations were not met, the college's next comprehensive evaluation (in 1999-2000) would be rescheduled earlier.

Because assessment does not take place in a vacuum and requires a myriad of institutional structures and faculty activities and processes, the challenge was clear: to develop an institution-wide response that would not only produce an acceptable "plan" but one that would also address the structural and process issues.

The college successfully met all mandates and requirements. In November 1999, the North Central Association evaluation team recommended continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years and gave the college a citation for its assessment initiative.

Conclusion

Because many other institutions have the same needs and problems as WCCCD, we hope that some of our approaches, decisions, and techniques will be useful. Our faculty have remained involved in, and for the most part enthusiastic about, the assessment process at the college; we would like to share our methods for keeping morale high.

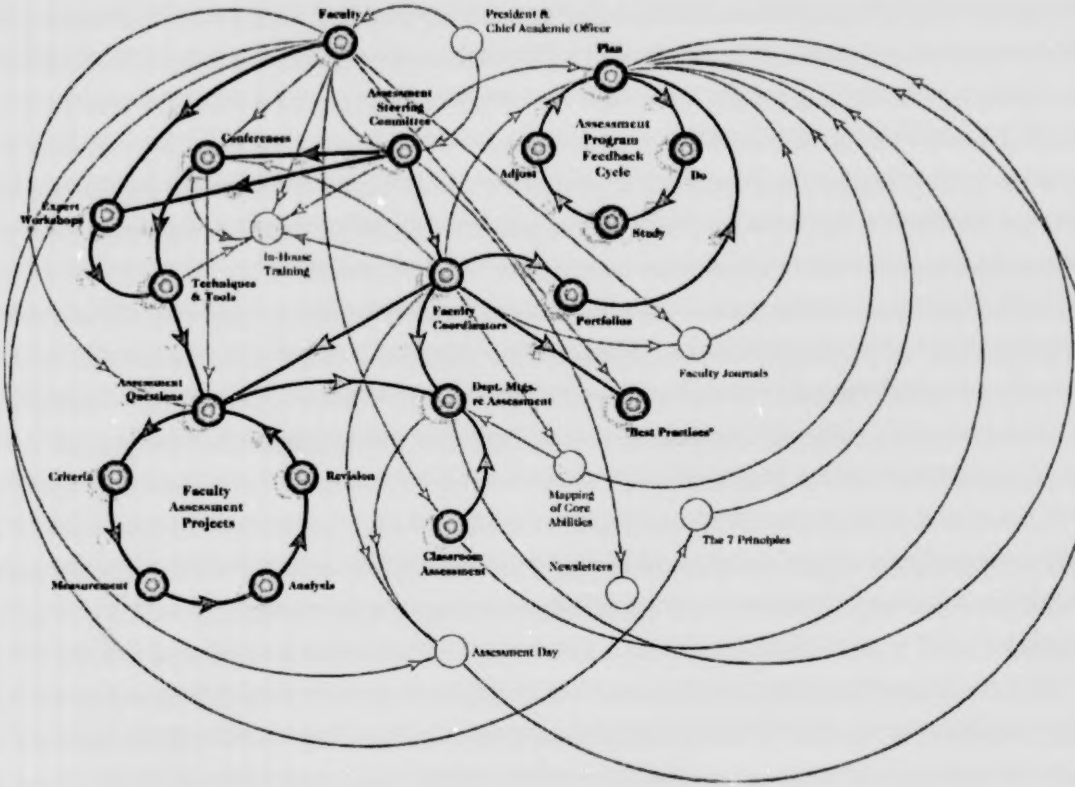
Ronald Dowe is Senior Assessment Analyst at Wayne County Community College District in Detroit, Michigan.

Mary Mahony is an English instructor and chair of the Assessment Steering Committee at Wayne County Community College District in Detroit, Michigan.

Teaching Reconnections: Assessment-Driven Institutional Renewal

Appendix

The assessment process can become an invaluable tool for institutional and individual renewal by providing increased opportunities for faculty growth and new channels of communication. This session describes the techniques that Wayne County Community College adopted to make assessment part of a "stealth" approach to faculty development and institutional and professional renewal.


Faculty
President & Chief Academic Officer
Plan
Assessment Steering Committee
Assessment Program Feedback Cycle
Adjust
Do
Study
Conferences
Expert Workshops
In-House Training
Techniques & Tools
Faculty Coordinators
Portfolios
Faculty Journals
Assessment Questions
Dept. Mtgs. re Assessment
"Best Practices"
Criteria
Faculty Assessment Projects
Revision
Mapping of Core Abilities
The 7 Principles
Classroom Assessment
Newsletters
Measurement
Analysis
Assessment Day

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Overcoming Obstacles to Assessment

Richard Baker
John Cosgrove
Deneen Shepherd

Resistance to change is a common phenomenon, especially in situations where the change is perceived as a threat. A panel of leaders in the assessment effort at St. Louis Community College will present a workshop in which they relate techniques they recently used to overcome faculty resistance and administrative misunderstanding of the assessment process. The interactive sessions will be presented in three parts: the GOOD, the BAD, and the UGLY, borrowing the title of a classic western movie. The GOOD (Great Opportunities to Open Doors) is a look at examples of successful assessment projects; the BAD (Breaking Assessment Down), is a look at barriers to assessment; and the UGLY (Using Groups Like You), as in the ugly duckling that eventually becomes a beautiful swan in the Hans Christian Andersen story, helps generate ideas on how to overcome the barriers and turn them into successes. Attendees will be encouraged to participate in brainstorming and other assessment techniques in order to share examples from their own experiences. Results of similar sessions will be presented, along with other techniques to overcome barriers and facilitate communication on the assessment process. Some of these techniques are open forums, committee liaisons to academic programs and departments, a faculty guide to assessment, an in-house assessment newsletter, an assessment website, and an in-house email discussion group on assessment.

Workshop Overview

At St. Louis Community College, the push to implement assessment of student learning outcomes has been very recent. After an initial planning task force, an assessment committee was formed of faculty members at each of our three campuses in Fall of 1997. A district assessment council includes members from each campus committee as well as the central administrative unit. Committee members have experienced many obstacles in our attempts to facilitate meaningful assessment. At this workshop we will share these experiences and involve participants in an exercise to identify their own obstacles and possible strategies to overcome them.

Workshop Outline

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Assessment at SLCC
3. Brainstorming Sessions
    - ○ G.O.O.D. (Great Opportunities to Open Doors)
    - ○ B.A.D. (Break Assessment Down)
    - ○ U.G.L.Y. (Using Groups Like You)
4. Using Assessment to Improve Teaching, Learning, and Student Services at SLCC
5. Wrap-up: a modified Classroom Assessment Technique

Workshop Content

Attendees will participate in each session and results will be peculiar to this workshop; what follows are examples of topics identified and discussed in earlier versions of The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.

☐ **GOOD: Great Opportunities to Open Doors**

What are some benefits, characteristics, or examples of successful assessment endeavors?

- data-based: identifies problems
- supporting what you are doing
- improves student learning
- recognition of curricular needs
- established student feedback process
- students involved in their own learning–find out what is in the students' minds
- reveals areas that need work, and receive affirmation from what works
- greater respect and empowerment of the students
- shifted focus to students
- keep NCA off our backs
- increases communication within the college (both between campuses and disciplines)

☐ **BAD: Breaking Assessment Down**

What are some of the barriers to meaningful assessment?

- lack of effective instruments
- fear of change
- collective agreement bargaining
- blaming faculty for whatever
- tying faculty pay to outcomes
- lack of administrative support
- imposed by accreditation needs; not to fulfill teaching/learning needs
- confusion about what assessment involves
- faculty don't understand advantages–see assessment as adding to workload
- poor communication of assessment process
- fear of assessment tied to faculty evaluation
- interference with academic freedom
- faculty distrust of students ability to give meaningful feedback
- rush in short space of time–timing
- misunderstanding about learning and teaching
- fear of evaluation
- fear of what you may get from students

☐ UGLY: Using Groups Like You

What can be done to overcome the barriers and transform the assessment process into a meaningful way to improve student learning?

- ○ benchmarking
- ○ publicity: newsletters, reports, success stories
- ○ networking–sharing process
- ○ identified/publicized all the good things already happening
- ○ good system of data collection and analysis
- ○ present data so can see trends, big picture
- ○ use complaints as free advice
- ○ not use assessment data in evaluation process (of individual faculty)
- ○ one on one for confused faculty, staff, and administration
- ○ cooperation with another community college for assessment purposes, good practices
- ○ information on retention distributed
- ○ personal testimonies(!!)

Attendees will be offered samples of written materials that have helped overcome the obstacles: manuals for staff use, the monthly assessment newsletter, the "good practices" fliers attached to campus newsletters, a summary flow chart of the assessment process and deadlines, and a condensed statement of faculty responsibility in assessment.

For additional information, attendees are urged to make contact with the presenters:

Richard Baker, Coordinator of Assessment 300 S. Broadway, St. Louis MO 63102	rbaker@cbil.stlcc.cc.mo.us (314) 539-5482.
John Cosgrove, Director of Institutional Research 300 S. Broadway, St. Louis MO 63102	jcosgrove@cbil.stlcc.cc.mo.us (314) 539-5381.
Deneen Shepherd, English Instructor 5600 Oakland Ave., St. Louis MO 63110	dshepherd@fpmail.stlcc.cc.mo.us (314) 644-9582.

Richard Baker is Coordinator of Assessment at St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri.

John Cosgrove is Director of Institutional Research at St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri.

Deneen Shepherd is an English instructor at St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri.

The At-Risk Student in the Freshman Year: An Assessment-Based Approach to Organizational Design

John R. Phillips
Robert R. Kerr

Colleges and universities continue to face the challenges of designing programs to benefit the under-prepared student. This "at-risk" population comes to college with inadequate academic preparation, especially in the areas of mathematical and language skills (Jones and Watson, 1990; Pickering and Calliotte, 1996). The focus on assessment of student academic achievement is a critical component of a wider range of programs and activities that must be in place if this population of at-risk students is to be academically successful.

We approach this challenge from the standpoint of using the assessment program as the pivotal point for monitoring student progress. We include specific suggestions for organizational design focused upon a Learning Center. These suggestions include development of a Bridge Program, expanding the advising system, and instituting special developmental courses in mathematics, English, and reading, as well as an introductory College Skills Course for at-risk students.

Creation and Expansion of the Learning Center

☐ The Learning Center Concept

At Springfield College in Illinois, the creation and expansion of the college Learning Center was the most important single program implemented to improve academic performance and increase student retention. The Learning Center was originally created as a general academic assistance office for the students. While this was considered a good beginning, it soon became clear that the office and its programs were in need of expansion so as to fully meet the students' needs. As a consequence, a wide array of services was developed. These included tutorial services, aggressive academic intervention, and other support services to enhance the ethical, intellectual, and personal development of the student body. (Love and Love, 1995)

Today the core responsibilities of the expanded Learning Center are to: 1) organize efforts to retain students through identification of students in need and through persistent follow-up; 2) maintain and record data concerning at-risk students, students admitted with special conditions, probationary students, and others as identified institutionally; 3) identify, train, and supervise student tutors; 4) provide tutoring for students; 5) pursue and rectify concerns reflected in Student Alert forms submitted by faculty; 6) conduct exit interviews for all students who withdraw; 7) compile and analyze assessment data and offer suggestions based on the findings; 8) serve as Academic Advisor for at-risk students; and 9) provide admission testing and placement testing to incoming students.

☐ Effectiveness of the Learning Center

The expanded Learning Center is, at this point, still hard to evaluate based on the limited data available. One measure of its effectiveness is through monitoring the student retention rate both before and after the creation of the Center. The data show that over the period of this pilot study, the retention rate improved by approximately 10% following the creation of the Learning Center.

A second major objective of the two-year study was to increase student and faculty awareness of the Learning Center and its services. To evaluate this aspect of the Learning Center's effectiveness, data were collected over the period to track student requests for tutoring (which tripled over the period of the study), the number of tutoring hours per term (which increased by more than 40%), and the number of Student Alert forms submitted by the faculty (which more than tripled). The marked increases in these areas are not due to any change in the composition or ability of the student body; rather they can be attributed to the success of the Learning Center staff in getting the message to the faculty and students that the Learning Center provides a broad range of services and assistance.

The Bridge Program

A pilot "Bridge" program was also initiated to assist those students who are under-prepared or considered to be at-risk due to their poor academic preparation, socioeconomic background, or other factors. Conducted as an intensive pre-session program in the summer and as an inter-session program in January, the two sessions focus on the basic skills students need to succeed in college: writing, computer usage, and effective study methods. The Bridge Program works to foster the students' own abilities in these areas and to bring out their own unique perspectives and talents. The academic goals of the program are to help students develop an understanding of the writing and editing process, construct workable theses for their writing assignments, feel comfortable using a word processing program, and understand different learning techniques. The social goals are to build a sense of group identity, bolster the individual's sense of efficacy, and strengthen the participants' confidence and comfort in a collegiate setting.

Preliminary data show that the Bridge programs were successful in retaining students who were identified as dropout-prone. On the other hand, the programs have not been able to help students achieve and maintain satisfactory grade point averages over multiple semesters. So, while attitudes within the group indicate a strong degree of social bonding among the participants, this constitutes only partial success. It does help explain the relatively high retention levels of the program participants. However important this may be, it is insufficient if, instead of dropping out, the students are expelled due to low academic performance. As the program continues to develop, it will be necessary to devise ways to maintain success in the social aspects of group identity and individual efficacy while also continuing to improve their academic success rate across time.

College Skills Course

For many years the college has had a one-credit learning skills course entitled "Skills: Success in College." This course was originally designed for Adult Program students who had been out of school for some years. It covers a range of topics such as goal setting, techniques of studying textbooks, taking notes in classes, taking tests, managing time, techniques of concentration, and use of the library. The content of the course was designed to be helpful in easing the transition back into the classroom for adult students who had been away from school for some years (Whitman, Spendlove, and Clark, 1986). To help in forming a group spirit, the course was expressly limited to the adult students.

Over the two years of this study, the course content was revised and additional sections of the course made it possible to offer the course to traditional age students. As a consequence, a pilot course was offered for at-risk traditional students, as well as students whose grades or test scores placed them at the border line of the at-risk category. This was in addition to the usual placement, where necessary, in developmental courses in composition, mathematics, and reading. The pilot program was judged a success and the decision was made to increase participation in the class. The following year, it was expanded to include 68% of the incoming freshmen. Five sections of the course were offered, one for Adult Program students only, and the remaining ones for Traditional Program students.

One major structural change was made. Because it is a one-credit hour course, it was possible to offer the college skills course in a modular format of three hours a week for five weeks. This change was initiated after a review of the pilot program. Instructors noted that the traditional one-hour per week format did not allow for enough faculty-student interaction. Since the very nature of the class depended on this high level of interaction, the course was recast in the more intensive modular form, thus making it possible for students to get an entire semester of information in only five weeks. In addition, it seemed more effective to have the students focus their attention on learning skills issues very early in the term. By completing the skills course at mid-semester, it was felt that the skills thus learned would serve them well in their other courses throughout the second half of the term.

Advising System

Because of the college's historic Catholic and Ursuline traditions, personal attention and careful advising are seen as critical components of our attempt to increase retention and ensure student success. As an ongoing process, advising involves much more than approving schedules and schedule changes (Frost, 1991); it is designed to provide students with a real mentor. This is accomplished by assigning them to a member of the faculty to whom they can turn with confidence when they need help or counsel. Various studies show that effective advisement is positively correlated with student retention (Frost, 1991).

In order to further strengthen the advising process, a comprehensive adviser's manual was developed during the first year of the study. This handbook contains detailed information on the college's academic advisement philosophy, objectives and responsibilities of advisers, advising policies and procedures, and curricular and graduation requirements. The handbook also contains a number of worksheets and check lists so that students and their advisers can be sure that various requirements of the college are met. Plans call for annual review and updating of this manual.

Developmental Courses for Students-at-Risk

As part of the College's *Assessment Program*, the role of the developmental courses (Seybert and Stoltz, 1996) has been examined with the purpose of trying to determine the impact of those courses on the success rate of those students whose academic preparation puts them at risk. Increasing numbers of students who apply to colleges and universities lack fundamental academic skills in reading, composition, and mathematics (Barton and Lapointe, 1995). Most colleges and universities are not exempt from this national trend. Many private, religiously affiliated colleges' traditional mission, however, demands that they make special efforts on behalf of these students. At Springfield College in Illinois, such efforts include the provision of specialized course work, personal guidance, tutoring, and other resources so as to increase the likelihood of student success, both in the associate's degree program and at the institutions to which they transfer for their bachelor's degree.

The developmental courses are offered in three areas: composition, reading, and mathematics. The success rate of students in these courses depends greatly upon what their academic level is at the time they enter the college. Obviously, colleges with limited resources cannot offer all students all the remedial help that they may require. It is, in consequence, necessary to focus on those at-risk students whom the institution realistically can expect to assist.

An important component of assessing any academic program is defining and rating student success. In the case of developmental courses, the goals are twofold, student success in the specific courses, as well as success in the chosen curriculum. Therefore, success should be measured on two levels: 1) that of successful completion of individual courses; and 2) programmatic success within a particular curriculum. Additionally, one should take into account those students who do not graduate, but do successfully transfer to senior-level institutions to complete their bachelor's degree. Therefore, the measure "transferability" was applied to those students who either: 1) graduated, ***or*** 2) attained at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA *and* earned at least 45 credit hours at the end of four semesters.

◇ **Course completion:** For the at-risk students required to take developmental composition during this study, only about one-third (33.9%) went from passing the developmental course into the next level, Freshman Rhetoric and Composition. Yet, over half (52.6%) of that cohort of students successfully passed the next higher level course, Survey of Literature, and half of those attained transferability. Therefore, if students can succeed in Developmental Composition and in Freshman Rhetoric and Composition, their odds of programmatic success greatly increase. Overall though, the transferability rate for the entire at-risk group was 8.9%, well below the 22.8% college-wide transferability rate for the same period.

◇ **Program completion/transferability** is the satisfactory completion of all requirements in a particular curriculum or of such courses or plan of study as may meet a particular non-degree seeking student's goal. Tracking this success is much more difficult. Simple graduation rates will not present the whole picture, because all students do not plan on graduating. Therefore, the "transferability" measure was used to assess student success. In analyzing the data, we examined the distribution of students among all the possible developmental courses and the number of such development courses in which each student was enrolled. The latter measure ranged from a single course to three such courses (reading, composition, and mathematics).

The results of the analysis showed that students who are only required to take developmental mathematics courses are much more likely to succeed than are students in reading or composition courses. In addition, developmental composition students are the least likely to attain transferability. The result is fairly clear when one examines the student's complete academic record: a deficiency in writing skills adversely affects a greater range of courses in the core curriculum than does a deficiency in mathematics.

Conclusions

Three obvious conclusions can be drawn from this preliminary analysis: 1) the college could choose to maintain the status quo, and not change current policies and programs; 2) the college could opt to deepen the developmental composition track, by adding one or more courses either above or below the current Developmental Composition course. This would permit active recruitment of at-risk students in the expectation that these programmatic changes would increase academic success and transferability rates; or 3) the college could strengthen the admission standards for composition and English, thus excluding students who are poorly prepared in this area and who have the least chance of attaining transferability. Of these options, only the second option is truly compatible with the historic commitment of the college's founders, the Ursuline Sisters, to provide educational opportunities to all students.

These are, of course, only preliminary findings. Ongoing research for some considerable time will be necessary to build a data base suitable for more refined and careful statistical analysis. Nevertheless, these preliminary findings do indicate potential paths for strengthening the college's programs for assisting the at-risk student in the freshman year.

References

Barton, Paul E., and Archie Lapointe. 1995. *Learning by degrees: Indicators of performance in higher education.* Princeton: Educational Testing Service.

Frost, Susan H. 1991. *Academic advising for student success: A system of shared responsibility.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Jones, Dionne J., and Betty Collier Watson. 1990. *High-risk students and higher education: Future trends.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Love, Patrick G., and Anne Goodwell Love. 1995. *Enhancing student learning: Intellectual, social, and emotional integration.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Pickering, James W., and James A. Calliotte. 1996. Using a freshman survey to identify at-risk freshmen. In *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses,* ed. T. W. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seybert, Jeffrey A., and Donald F. Stoltz. 1996. Assessment of development programs. In *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses,* ed. T. W. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

John R. Phillips is Professor of Political and Social Sciences at Springfield College in Illinois.

Robert R. Kerr is Associate Director of Career Instruction Initiatives at the Illinois Community College Board.

Diversifying Assessment, Re-Examining Learners Assessed: An Important Look at Developmental Education

Kathleen Iudicello
Pearl Williams
Lawrence Pesta

Moving from the Margins to the Center

The role of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education is to assure and improve quality in higher education. As an NCA institution, Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Arizona, shares this focus. Like NCA, Estrella Mountain Community College values and views assessment as a tool to improve quality in higher education. This paper focuses upon an often overlooked and under-represented area of higher education: Developmental Education. The new century calls for diversity like no century ever has, and assessment is an area where diversity can and should flourish.

Gloria Anzaldua's 1987 work, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza=La Frontera,* addresses the physical Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexican border. What evolves from this concrete geographical focus, however, is an attention to the numerous and diverse borders that surround everyone every day. She writes: "Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy (Anzaldua 1987)." Within higher education, there are, as elsewhere in all societies, borders of race and class, but there are also borders constructed from levels of education. One such border exists between Developmental Education and General Education, and General Education constitutes the level within institutions of higher education where attention to assessment usually takes place. Anzaldua further defines a border as "a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary (Anzaldua 1987, 3)." Developmental Education is situated currently in such a borderland state, often marginalized in dialogues of higher education. It is time that those involved in higher education actively move Developmental Education towards the center, addressing the learners that exist in this place, and assessment is a tool that can make such a motion possible.

Attending to the area of Developmental Education speaks to the diversity of assessment, representing an often marginalized student group by addressing the quality of learning for students who enroll in institutions of higher learning yet are not quite ready for General Education courses. In terms of equity, the quality of higher education learning for Developmental Education students requires the same attention as that of General Education students. Since Developmental Education students are on a track to General Education programs, it is imperative that their learning is assessed so that they will succeed in and productively contribute to those programs.

Estrella Mountain Community College is part of the Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona. One of this district's goals is that "students will demonstrate competencies in courses below 100 level (reading, mathematics, English) that prepare them for success in college level courses (Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board Goals and Measures 1999-2000)." At Estrella Mountain Community College, Developmental

Education is a vital part of higher education. Estrella Mountain Community College is concerned with adult literacy and has dedicated an entire academic division to Developmental Education. In order to improve teaching and learning at Estrella Mountain Community College, faculty members there are assessing Developmental Education, along with two other academic programs, General Education/Transfer and Workforce Development, at the program level.[1] Currently, these faculty are assessing the abilities of critical thinking[2] and communication,[3] both of which were chosen and defined by faculty as the first of many abilities that faculty intend to assess at the program level.

Assessment is a faculty-owned and faculty-driven process at Estrella Mountain Community College and falls under the Student Academic Achievement Plan, which faculty wrote to instruct and construct the process of assessing student learning. The Student Academic Achievement Committee (SAAC), which includes all faculty members at Estrella Mountain Community College, works toward implementing this plan and is led by the SAAC Steering Team. In terms of faculty members, this team consists of two SAAC Co-Chairs, three team facilitators (one for each academic program being assessed) and their respective committees, and Academic Division Chairs. The purpose of assessment at Estrella Mountain Community College is threefold: 1) enhance students' abilities and success, 2) determine focus for development and growth of students' abilities, and 3) use assessment as a tool for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Since Developmental Education is currently being assessed, this speaks to the importance of Developmental Education as an academic program at Estrella Mountain Community College and within the Maricopa Community College District of Arizona.

At Estrella Mountain Community College, Developmental Education is a program that enhances student skills in English, English as a Second Language, Mathematics, and Reading in below 100 level courses. A strong emphasis is placed on instruction with individual support, small classes, concerned faculty, and creative learning. Instruction is enriched through technology, interaction with other learners, and opportunities to conduct volunteer work in the community. Providing supportive, collaborative, and knowledgeable assistance for students to enhance their academic success, Estrella Mountain Community College's Learning Enhancement Center and Information Resources offer additional instructional support. Students are advised to participate in the Developmental Education academic program based on placement test scores and advisor referral. Students enrolled in one or more developmental courses are considered participants in the developmental program. Such courses build confidence and contribute to student academic success. Developmental Education courses are designed to maximize a student's ability to pursue additional education and training. In doing so, these courses offer students the opportunity to build an educational foundation for transfer programs, degree programs, and training/career programs. This paper focuses on the value of assessing Developmental Education at the program level.

The issues that this paper addresses are as follows: 1) the value of assessing Developmental Education in institutions of higher education, 2) the challenges and rewards of creating a Developmental Education program assessment tool, 3) the first-hand experience of utilizing this tool based upon the spring 1998 and 1999 Developmental Education Assessment Test, and 4) the ways in which Developmental Education assessment is a tool to improve quality in higher education. This last issue will include discussions of the improvement of the assessment tool.

This paper is intended for members of higher education institutions who are concerned with comprehensively addressing their student populations, especially the needs of learners frequently overlooked and our often too narrow focus upon General Education. Hopefully, after reading this paper, faculty members and members of college and university administrations will be encouraged to begin a productive dialogue that addresses the quality of student learning and instruction in the area of Developmental Education. Since one central goal of most Developmental Education students is to devote themselves to higher education, this paper inclusively concerns those who represent various areas of higher education, from two-year colleges to four-year universities, and are positioned diversely within institutions of higher education.

Concrete Experience: The Past as Prologue

Developmental Education Assessment discussions began in October of 1997. A team consisting of approximately five faculty members, including Pearl Williams as Team facilitator, and an instructional designer was created. After initial planning meetings, the Developmental Education Assessment Team constructed a plan of action. It reviewed the concept of abilities and discussed a timeline, a proposed cohort, and various implementation strategies with the Student Academic Assessment Committee.

As the Developmental Education Assessment Team narrowed its search for an assessment tool, its members opted to create their own assessment tool that linked to the Developmental Education program competencies and the abilities that they were and still are assessing: critical thinking and communication. One English faculty member and one math faculty member took primary responsibility for the development of the instrument after the Team roughly crafted the assessment test. The Team decided that a small pilot of the instrument would take place in May 1998.

The cohort was then selected for this assessment. The cohort consisted of students who were completing the highest level of Developmental Education classes in both English and Mathematics (ENG071 and MAT 092). If a student was enrolled at the time in only one of these classes, the student should have completed the other course with a C or better during a prior semester. The spring 1998 cohort contained twenty-two students. Eight students actually took the assessment.

The instrument required each student to assume the role of an auto sales person. Students wrote a five-paragraph essay, comparing and contrasting two vehicles in order to argue why one car should be purchased instead of the other. Students were provided with car reviews from national publications to provide them with support information about the vehicles. The essay had to be persuasive in nature, covering points such as cost of cars, rebates, loan rates and periods, and state tax rate. Figures, charts, and calculations were provided for the students. Students had to complete basic mathematical computations in order to offer a solution to the problem, and participants completed items in data tables, substituted values in tables into appropriate formulas, and displayed their calculations with answers. The essay also required a clearly stated thesis statement that identified the problem and described a specific solution to the problem. The student needed to state at least three persuasive reasons why a solution should be implemented and had to include statements of comparison and contrast between the selected solution and other possible solutions. Students' essays needed to use language appropriate for the task/audience and had to be well organized, unified, and adequately developed. Effective topic sentences, which support the thesis or problem statement, were essential, as were transitions, varied sentence structure, and grammatically correct sentences.

As incentives for students to participate in the assessment process, the Team arranged stipends for students and a scholarship drawing. In addition, The Team reserved Estrella Mountain Community College's Testing Center as a place for students to take the assessment, which was then considered a Pilot Test. When these arrangements were completed, the Team mailed letters to students in this Developmental Education cohort.

An Estrella Mountain English faculty member who had extensive experience with holistic scoring and who had completed Educational Testing Services' training conducted the scoring session for the Developmental Education Assessment Team's pilot assessment of eight Developmental Education students. The original scoring rubric was created through a collective effort of the Developmental Education Assessment Team and the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction's instructional designer. However, Estrella Mountain Community College faculty scored the assessment test, using the process recommended by its in-house trainer.

The Developmental Education Assessment Team was responsible for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the assessment test's data. Faculty interpreted composite scores in order to improve teaching and learning in the Developmental Education academic program. Once this was completed, the Team reported the composite scores to faculty and other pertinent audiences as appropriate.

In June 1998, the Developmental Education Assessment Team received a review of its assessment tool and process from an external expert, Dr. Joe Ryan, from the Office of Institutional Research at Arizona State University West. The review was objective and informative. According to Dr. Ryan, the instrument and the process represented "good practice." Dr. Ryan encouraged the Team to further refine and enhance its Developmental Education assessment instrument.

Although the Developmental Education Assessment Team's cohort was too small for the Team's members to validate the test results statistically, the pilot scores encouraged them. Most of the students tested at a proficient level, demonstrating the abilities of critical thinking and communication efficiently and the attainment of academic program competencies. As a result, the Team believed then that with additional training, enhancement of the rubric, and a larger sample size, future Developmental Education Assessment Teams would be able to attain the reliability this Team could not.

The pilot assessment results provided the Developmental Education Assessment Team with a general snapshot of how Developmental Education students are doing at Estrella Mountain Community College, which is to say that they are thinking critically and communicating effectively. The results also indicated that the Team had created a dynamic and productive assessment process for the improvement of teaching and learning in Developmental Education at Estrella Mountain Community College.

Concrete Experience: In the Here and Now

In the fall of 1998, Lawrence Pesta replaced Pearl Williams as the Team Leader of the Developmental Education Assessment Team. As a new Team, they began their work by revising the test the previous Developmental Education Assessment Team first gave in the spring of 1998. The revision of this test entailed changing some of the language on the test in consideration of readability, minor revisions to the math portion, and amendments to the rubric and scoring.

The test was then presented to a new cohort of 29 students in the spring of 1999. Students were encouraged to participate by letter and telephone contact. They were offered a gift certificate of $20 for their participation, and individual instructors encouraged the students to take the test. Out of the 29 eligible students, six participated.

The Team immediately decided to delay the scoring of this test and to consider the urgent challenge of student participation. It consulted with a student success specialist at Estrella Mountain Community College. She devised questions and interviewed students via the telephone as a means of ascertaining the reasons for non-participation. More students agreed to participate. However, much to the Team's disappointment, none of these students kept their testing appointments. The discrepancy between the lack of student participation in Developmental Education assessment and General Education assessment was glaringly evident: just under 50% of the students in the General Education cohort completed that program's assessment test. Therefore, the Developmental Education Assessment Team decided that further and specialized efforts were needed to encourage Developmental Education students to participate in assessment.

The telephone interviewing process prompted the suggestion that future testing be done in the classroom to guarantee full participation. There could be security issues, involving sense of self, at work here that are particular to Developmental Education students. However, knowing that assessment is most effective at the institutional level, and after much discussion of the situation, the Team decided to try outside classroom testing once again. It was the Team's hope that the low participation was a one-time event.

Therefore, faced with a new cohort of students in the fall of 1999, the Developmental Education Assessment Team again decided to administer its Developmental Education test. In preparation for this, the test was again re-examined. During this time, a mathematics faculty member serving on the committee noticed that the assessment test did not give enough attention to a particular math competency that the Maricopa County Community College District insisted be addressed in the highest level Developmental Education mathematics course: a proficiency in Algebra. After consulting with several mathematics faculty members at Estrella Mountain Community College, the Team decided to create an algebraic portion, which it subsequently added to the test.

In an effort to encourage participation, the Team decided to invite 50 Developmental Education students, including those in the actual fall 1999 cohort, to a luncheon on campus. At this luncheon, Developmental Education students learned more about assessment and its direct link to the improvement of teaching and learning at Estrella Mountain Community College. SAAC student representatives, faculty, SAAC leadership, counselors, and student success specialists addressed the students. The luncheon featured a "share the mike" format, which encouraged the students to really share "where they were at" in regards to assessment. Students shared their fears and assumptions about assessment, and the Team was able to help clarify significant misunderstandings.

The comments students made were very interesting and insightful. Here is a sample:

> *"I have no idea what assessment is and have never heard of assessment."*
>
> *"Counselors should tell students about assessment."*
>
> *"The letter to the students should be more clear because I didn't know what it really meant."*

The sponsored luncheon provided some interesting ideas on how to ensure greater student participation. In addition, it drew SAAC's attention to some of the challenges of student participation in assessment. As a result, SAAC decided to increase its efforts, working with the Office of Institutional Advancement and the Office of Student Life, to ensure student and faculty awareness of assessment as a valuable tool to improving teaching and learning at Estrella Mountain Community College.

Letters and telephone calls encouraged the fall 1999 cohort to participate in the testing process. The Office of Institutional Advancement was very helpful in this effort, designing a postcard that followed up on the letters and telephone calls. When the time came for students to take the assessment test, nine students out of a cohort of 30 participated.

The spring of 2000 will find the Division of Developmental Education's Assessment Team working on the following activities: 1) revising the current rubric to reflect the changes made to the math portion, 2) grading the tests in question, 3) analyzing the results, 4) discussing further revisions to the test and rubric, 5) considering alternative forms of testing, and 6) addressing student participation challenges. The Team will continue to keep in close contact with its cohort, providing as much assurance and encouragement as cohort members need for a successful assessment experience.

The End as Beginning: Working with the Results

The Developmental Education Assessment Team is currently addressing issues surrounding the implementation of the abilities of critical thinking and communication in Developmental Education classrooms. Estrella Mountain Community College faculty members will hold their first workshop in the spring of 2000, addressing this topic and sharing strategies of implementation. Future Developmental Education faculty orientation meetings, training, development, and workshops will reflect Estrella Mountain Community College's application of the Developmental Education assessment results to the improvement of teaching and learning in Developmental Education classrooms. The Developmental Education Assessment Team will continuously review its assessment process and improve that process to fit the needs of Developmental Education students. In doing so, the Developmental Education Assessment Team is bringing an often marginalized segment of the assessment population in higher education to the center and thus diversifying assessment, assuring and improving quality in higher education.

Notes

[1] An academic program is defined as a sequence of courses leading to a degree or certificate.

[2] A student who thinks critically processes problems by: identifying and defining the problem, developing and implementing strategies, evaluating information, reaching conclusions, and responding to the problem.

[3] A student who communicates effectively: responds to an audience, demonstrates a clear sense of purpose, organizes information, and delivers information using appropriate language.

References

Anzaldua, Gloria. 1987. *Borderlands: The new mestiza=La frontera.* Preface. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board Goals and Measures 1999-2000.

Kathleen Iudicello is Co-Chair of Student Academic Assessment Committee and English Faculty at Maricopa County Community College–Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Arizona.

Pearl Williams is Division Chair for Developmental Education and Reading/English Faculty at Maricopa County Community College–Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Arizona.

Lawrence Pesta is Developmental Education Assessment Team Facilitator and ESL Faculty at Maricopa County Community College–Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Arizona.

Assessing Non-Traditional Adult Degree Programs: The Framework, the Instruments, the Results

David Wright
Mark Smith

In February 1997 an NCA evaluation team visited Indiana Wesleyan University to review a new internet-based MBA program to be offered within the Division of Adult and Professional Studies. The team's report was complimentary of the program and its supporting structures with one exception. The team did not find an adequate framework for assessment, nor did it find evidence that the institution was completing the feedback loops that true assessment requires. This finding set the stage for a comprehensive, multi-faceted effort to create and implement a working assessment plan within the Division of Adult and Professional Studies.

Institutional Background

Indiana Wesleyan University's Division of Adult and Professional Studies offers nine associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree programs with a current enrollment of almost 5000 adult students. These programs use the off-campus, cohort-based, lockstep, accelerated model that has become a familiar feature of degree programs created specifically for working adults. To support the academic programs, the Division provides comprehensive services such as off-campus library services, single-step registration, academic advising, testing, and resource distribution.

In 1995 the Division of Adult and Professional Studies had produced an assessment plan that was included in the comprehensive plan submitted by the university to the NCA. But that plan had never been fully implemented, nor had it been regularly reviewed and updated as the Division progressed through the assessment cycle. The evaluation team's advice was the catalyst needed to revitalize the Division's commitment to the assessment process.

The Framework

The Division uses a systems-based approach to the administration and operation of its programs. Thus, in early 1997 faculty and administrators set out to design and implement a systemized framework for assessment. This process was led by the Associate Dean for Adult and Professional Studies working closely with academic department heads and their faculty members.

Through a series of Division-wide meetings, the faculty, staff, and administration of the Division worked through a process of self-education and planning. This began with a thorough review of the assessment literature and of the institution's prior efforts. Based on this review, the Division settled on an assessment model outlined by James O. Nichols. His very useful handbook, *A Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation,* became the primary resource guiding the development of the Division's assessment framework.

Nichols outlines the following major components of an assessment framework.

> The critical elements of the Institutional Effectiveness Paradigm . . . are as follows:
>
> 1. Establishment of an Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose;
> 2. Identification of Intended Educational (Instructional), Research, and Service Outcomes/Administrative Objectives;
> 3. Assessment of the Extent to Which the Intended Outcomes and Objectives Are Being Accomplished; and
> 4. Adjustment of the Institution's Purpose, Intended Outcomes/Objectives, or Activities Based on Assessment Findings. (pp. 7-8)

Building on this basic model, the Division moved forward in building its assessment framework by taking three steps.

- ◇ **First, an assessment process was put in place that would "institutionalize" assessment.** This process includes the following elements.

  1. **Assessment Meetings**
     - ○ Departments hold monthly assessment planning meetings.
     - ○ Departments conduct an annual "Assessment Day" to review data, summarize findings, draw conclusions, plan institutional adjustments, and refocus the process for the coming year.
     - ○ The Associate Dean conducts an annual Division-wide "Assessment Day" in which departments report their findings and the Division sanctions institutional adjustments growing out of the previous year's assessment efforts.
  2. **Data Collection**
     - ○ The position of Coordinator of Assessment was proposed to assist departments in developing goals and measurement instruments, implementing data collection processes (surveys), and in interpreting their findings.
     - ○ The Division developed proposals to upgrade its data collection equipment (computer, scanner, and software) to handle increased volume.
     - ○ Budgets were proposed in support of assessment activities.
  3. **Reporting**
     - ○ The Coordinator of Assessment produces an annual summary Assessment Report for the Division and for the university administration.
  4. **Timeline**
     - ○ The Division established a timeline and schedule for the review of its programs.

- ◇ **Second, the administration committed the necessary resources and time to enable the process to function.** In addition to focusing the efforts of the existing faculty and staff on this area, the administration created a new position, granted faculty release time, and purchased needed equipment. Just as importantly, central administrators made assessment a high priority in strategic planning.

- ◇ **Third, the administration, faculty, and staff of the Division learned how to implement the chosen assessment model by working through the following steps.**
  - ○ First, the mission of the Division was explored in relationship to the overarching institutional mission. From this process a set of broad Division goals were articulated that were tied directly to the mission.
  - ○ Second, each department produced a mission statement that was tied directly to the overall mission statement.
  - ○ Third, each department developed specific objectives that were tied to their mission statements.
  - ○ Fourth, each department chose instruments by which to measure their stated objectives.

- Fifth, data were collected using the measurement instruments. These data were then analyzed and conclusions sought.
- Sixth, departments "closed the loop" by using their assessment data to make institutional adjustments. These changes were approved through normal academic and administrative channels and budgets were affected accordingly.

This, then, is the framework for assessment that has been put in place by the Division. This framework has becom a part of the "institutional landscape" of the Division and thus gives structured guidance to its improvement efforts.

The Assessment Instruments and Their Results

After establishing the assessment framework, faculty and administrators were able to focus on the articulation of objectives and the selection of instruments used to measure the achievement of each objective.

This work was carried out during the departments' monthly assessment planning meetings. It required months of concerted effort; but in the end, each department had an assessment plan that articulated goals, objectives, measurement instruments, performance criteria, data collection steps, and feedback loops.

Following is a representative list of the instruments the departments chose. Some are used by all departments. Others are specific to certain degree programs.

○ **Standardized Tests:**	ETS Academic Profile California Critical Thinking Skills Tests NLN Community Nursing Exam ETS Major Field Achievement Tests
○ **Collaborative Tests:**	MBA Pre/Post Test produced in collaboration with four colleges (faculty-written items)
○ **APS-Designed Instruments:**	Pre/Post Student Essay Scoring Rubrics for Applied Management Projects in graduate business programs Scoring Rubrics for Portfolio System Alumni Satisfaction Surveys Employer Satisfaction Surveys General Information Survey Off-Campus Library Services Effectiveness Survey Resource Distribution Effectiveness Survey Faculty Curriculum Evaluation Survey End of Course Survey of Student Satisfaction

The Coordinator of Assessment and the research assistant are responsible for the compilation of these data for the departments' use on a monthly basis and at their Annual Assessment Days.

An example drawn from one department will illustrate the way this process has worked. The General Studies department is responsible for all liberal arts and general studies courses offered in the Division. Following is that department's Assessment Plan.

☐ Departmental Assessment Plan: General Studies

- **Process of goal selection.** In August 1997 the General Studies Department was formed to give oversight to the delivery of general education courses to associate degree students and general elective courses offered to bachelor degree completion students. In order to develop an assessment plan, a General Studies Assessment Task Force met for four sessions during October, November, December, January, 1998-99.
- **Objectives for goals.** The mission of the Department of General Studies is to educate the undergraduate adult student in order to meet a coherent general education requirement in a way that is consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure a breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The Program objectives are for students to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of a Christian worldview.
2. Apply ethical thought and action in both a professional and personal setting.
3. Exhibit the values and skills necessary for lifelong learning.
4. Comprehend complex reading materials.
5. Apply critical thinking skills concerning ideas and performance.
6. Develop skill in problem solving and decision making.
7. Demonstrate effective written communication skills.
8. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills.
9. Exhibit the ability to find needed information (information literacy).
10. Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in teams.

◇ **Selection of assessment measures**

1. The Academic Profile is a 40-minute standardized test published and scored by ETS. It assesses general academic knowledge in humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, reading, writing, critical thinking, and mathematics. It is administered in selected core groups during their last general studies course. The norm-referenced scores allow us to compare our students' general studies achievement with that of students nationwide.
2. The Personal Learning Anthology (PLA) is a portfolio of student work that provides evidence of progress on the "10 Across" objectives.

◇ **Performance criteria**

1. Scores on the Academic Profile will meet or exceed 60% as compared to students at other schools.
2. When a sample of 50 PLAs are reviewed by the Coordinator of Assessment, 90% will meet or exceed the criteria of a 10% improvement in writing, oral presentation, team skills, critical thinking, problem solving, ethical thought, Christian world view, and information literacy.

◇ **Collection and analysis of data**

1. The Academic Profile was administered to selected core groups. It was sent to ETS for scoring. Data were analyzed in the fall of 1999.
2. Students are currently compiling Personal Learning Anthologies. The department provides a schedule of inclusions and a set of rubrics by which the Five Skills Writing Samples and Oral Presentations are scored. These are given in a pre/post test format so that growth can be documented. The Team Skills and Writing Proficiency Evaluations are developed and are being administered in a pre/post-test format.

◇ **Comparison Study.** Scores on the Academic Profile will be norm referenced giving a comparison to students nationwide. They are also compared with APS results from 1994/1995.

Within the context of this overarching assessment plan, following is an example of a specific assessment project undertaken by the General Studies department with regard to the math competency of students enrolled in the Associate of Science in Business program.

☐ A Sample Assessment Project: General Studies Math Competency

◇ **Process of goal selection.** The General Studies faculty committee proposed to adopt the IWU World Changers Outcomes (a set of institution-wide faculty-written learning outcomes) as their departmental outcomes goals. These include a general "liberal arts foundation." This proposal was accepted by general faculty vote in April 1999.

- **Selection of assessment measures.** The ETS Academic Profile provided both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced scores for math skills.
- **Performance criteria.** All of the students completing the Associate of Science in Business will have a math proficiency at Level 1 or above.
- **Collection and analysis of data.** The Academic Profile was administered to 74 ASB students in their last general education course during the spring of 1999. Math Proficiency Levels indicated that 36% of the students were not operating at a Level 1. Math was the weakest area for IWU students.
- **Comparison study.** Math scores indicated that IWU students scored slightly lower than several referent samples of students.
- **Adjustments made.** Based upon these conclusions, the following adjustments were made.
    1. MAT110 Business Math was rewritten for the Associate of Science in Business program. This course revision focused on the inclusion of more effective instructional methods to be used by faculty teaching in the program.
    2. MAT103 General Math, a new online elective, is under development as a vehicle to enhance the math skills of students who advance to one of the baccalaureate business programs. It has an intermediate algebra text and a newly strengthened course description.

Improvements Based on Assessment Data

The data gathered by instruments such as these have provided the Division's departments with opportunities to examine their activities and plan adjustments accordingly. Following are examples of other improvements made on the basis of specific departmental assessment projects.

- **M.B.A. Applied Management Project.** Student and faculty data on End of Course Surveys and Curriculum Surveys indicated that there was confusion and inconsistency in Project expectations. A new Applied Management Project was designed to be more closely monitored by faculty. Each core group is assigned a faculty-advisor that assists in the construction and assessment of the M.B.A. Project. The expectations for the Project have changed to include a research component, a business plan, and the integration of Christian faith in ethical decision-making.
- **Re-sequencing of R.N. to B.S. curriculum.** As a result of data reflecting student achievement on the National League for Nursing Community Health Exam, the R.N. to B.S. core curriculum has been re-sequenced so that Community Health is no longer offered early in the program. The department also changed the manner in which students are tested: They will now be tested at the beginning of the course immediately following Community Health, rather than being tested when students have only completed 75% of the Community Health course.
- **Master of education advising.** Data from Graduate Education students (End of Course Surveys and General Information Surveys) indicated low satisfaction with advising, as well as confusion about the M.Ed. Applied Masters Portfolio and Unifying Assessment Project. Changes included the implementation of an instructor-advisor for each core group for the entire program. This instructor-advisor serves as a coach and evaluator in the development of the Unifying Assessment Project and supervises the Portfolio process.
- **Master of Education Professional Community.** Data from faculty indicated the need for more collaboration and coordination among off-campus faculty. Graduate Education Meeting Minutes indicated that most faculty members were not attending meetings regularly. At the Annual Program Review Day a proposal was made to create a system of more frequent and extensive faculty meetings and professional development sessions offered around the state of Indiana. In addition, a system of regional faculty leaders was developed in specific core areas. Further, steps were taken to link faculty members through a Web Board virtual discussion room that is sub-divided by core subject areas.
- **Study Groups.** As a result of data about student dissatisfaction with small study groups (General Information Surveys, End of Course Surveys), a Study Groups Task Force implemented the following changes. 1) a faculty FAQ sheet was prepared to more thoroughly prepare faculty to implement study groups and to deal with study group problems; 2) information about the implementation and management of study groups was presented

to class representatives at regularly scheduled Class Representative Meetings; 3) a component on study group guidance was added to the rotation of faculty development sessions.

- **Faculty orientation and training.** Student and peer/administrator evaluations of faculty indicated a need for improvement in the Division's overall quality of instruction. Changes were instituted in recruitment, orientation, and development processes. These include: 1) the addition of more full-time faculty members; 2) the establishment of clearer guidelines for faculty hiring and qualification; 3) the creation of a new faculty initial orientation workshop consisting of two evening sessions; 4) the creation of a new faculty development requirement for all adjunct faculty; 5) the institution of Professional Growth and Development Plans completed by all faculty members in the Division.
- **Advising.** In response to student and staff dissatisfaction with advising as reflected in data from Student General Information and End of Course Surveys, the Division's advising system is being restructured. A pilot program is under way to test the new system in one region of the state.

These are examples of feedback loops at work in the core functional areas that control the quality of the Division's programs–curriculum, instruction, student learning activities, and student advising. As such, they indicate the success with which the Division has built a comprehensive assessment framework to reflect both its successes and its weaknesses.

Conclusion

The process of building a comprehensive assessment system has been a rewarding challenge for the Division. The IWU staff would agree with Russell Peterson's observation.

> "It is true that designing and implementing assessment systems that provide basic data for policy makers [*administrators*] for purposes of accountability has proved to be comparatively easy.…The design and implementation of assessment systems *that develop information that can be used to improve the quality of instruction* [emphasis added] has proven to be much more difficult than expected" ("Creating a Context to Support Assessment," p. 179).

Nichols suggests that such a process requires three to four years of concentrated effort. The experience of Indiana Wesleyan University's Division of Adult and Professional Studies would bear this out.

But the dividends are proving well worth the effort. Just now entering their fourth year of assessment activity, the Division's faculty, administrators, and staff are beginning to become comfortable with the process and are able to see concrete results. Perhaps the best of these is the ability to watch a coherent, logically connected, and consistent process of institutional improvement take shape as the Division follows its framework, uses its chosen instruments, and builds on the information-based conclusions made possible by its assessment plan.

References

López, Cecilia L. 1998. The Commission's assessment initiative: A progress report. Paper presented in March 1998 at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in Chicago.

Nichols, James O. 1995. *A practitioner's handbook for institutional effectiveness and student outcomes assessment implementation.* New York: Agathon Press.

Peterson, Russell O. 1999. Creating a context to support assessment. *A collection of papers on self-study and institutional improvement.* Chicago: North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

David Wright is Vice President/Dean at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion.

Mark Smith is Associate Dean at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion.

Maintaining Momentum in the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

Linda Allen

Introduction

No matter whether the institutional configuration is a single campus with a small faculty or a multi-campus form with a large, diverse faculty, implementing a program to assess student academic achievement is a difficult task that requires careful planning in the execution stage if the support and participation of busy faculty are to be achieved. Maintaining enthusiasm for the assessment process once instituted is, however, an entirely different matter. In fact, assuring longitudinal faculty participation is most often the largest impediment to the success of many institutional assessment initiatives in academe. At Kirkwood Community College, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) has instituted a process to maintain faculty momentum in the general education assessment model that employs the "tried and true" method of faculty mentoring within a particular department and the communication of assessment activities between departments via cyberspace.

Institutional Profile

Kirkwood Community College is comprised of more than 12 sites in nine cities scattered across a seven county district. The main campus, with over 325 acres, seven major classrooms and administrative facilities, and 50 smaller support facilities, is located in the east central community of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Kirkwood is a comprehensive community college that provides college transfer, adult education, and vocational-technical curricula through more than 60 Applied Science and Technology programs, 16 Career Option programs, and 48 Arts and Sciences major areas. In addition, Kirkwood offers high school completion classes, customized job training programs, and a variety of offerings for community education. To provide these education opportunities, Kirkwood Community College employs 219 full-time faculty and between 370-400 adjunct faculty for a student enrollment that has grown from 199 students, when Kirkwood offered its first classes in 1966, to the college's current enrollments of over 11,000 students.

Development of the General Education Assessment Model

The development of the general education assessment model proceeded as follows:

- **1992-93.** The Kirkwood mission was reviewed and, with input from all areas, college goals were established.
- **1993-94.** In support of the mission review process, the Kirkwood Board of Trustees identified themes and values. The Academic Assessment Committee initiated the development of Kirkwood's Assessment Plan and agreed that "for the purposes of assessment," "general education is defined as those outcomes that are common to the AA, AS and AAS." The Institutional Measurement Committee assumed responsibility for the collection of institutional data. The Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) project was piloted to engage faculty in classroom research activities.
- **1994-95.** The NCA approved Kirkwood's Assessment Plan. The CATs project became a faculty initiative and academic assessment activities were included in the President's Annual Report.

- **1995-96.** A faculty-led General Education Assessment Committee was formed and worked to formulate general education goals and objectives (see Appendix A) and to develop a plan to assess the goals and objectives across the curriculum. The Career Program Assessment Team was established to develop a means to assess applied science and career option programs.

- **1996-97.** The Academic Assessment Committee disbanded in favor of the two teams charged with responsibility for Career Program Assessment and General Education Assessment. The Interdisciplinary Steering Committee began oversight of college-wide assessment activities. The Career Program Assessment team implemented program reviews for one-third of all applied science and career option programs. The GEAC developed a student survey of general education goals and objectives; developed and piloted a curriculum inventory that identified where general education goals and objectives were being taught or reinforced across the curriculum and piloted embedded "performance assessments" for writing, math, and cultural awareness of diversity general education objectives. CATs continued and the Process Learning project, initiated with external leadership, took on a Kirkwood identity that demonstrated that assessment was key to the learning process. Reports from the General Education and Career Program committees were included in the academic assessment activities discussed in the President's Report.

- **1997-98.** Community Education began a new assessment program for its courses. CATs and Process Learning continued assessment activities. Self-study committees began collecting and using assessment data for a comprehensive institutional review in preparation for NCA and Iowa state accreditation visits in fall 1999. After an analysis of the results, it was decided in the spring of 1998 that for the sake of efficiency, the questions contained in the piloted general education student survey would be embedded in the college-wide student survey conducted by the Institutional Measurement Committee every other spring. Piloted performance assessments were analyzed by GEAC scoring teams and found to be invalid either because of the assessment design or the tool/rubric used to evaluate the assessment.

- **1998-99.** In fall 1998, the GEAC received standing committee status to provide evidence of administrative support for faculty-led assessment efforts. During fall 1998, it was also discovered that data from the General Education curriculum inventory were flawed due to misinformation about what was being asked or a tendency to respond to perceived expectations. The inventories were sent back to faculty/departments for revisions. Nationally recognized assessment expert Dr. Barbara Walvoord was invited to campus to conduct workshops on "assessment" of general education and the creation of assessment Primary Trait Analysis scales (PTA scales)/rubrics. In spring 1999, faculties were asked to select an assignment that assessed a specific general education goal/objective, evaluate that assignment using a PTA scale/rubric and submit the collected data to the GEAC for analysis. To assist faculty in the process, the GEAC held a "Mentoring Workshop" and began the process of building a cadre of faculty mentors for the assessment program.

- **1999-2000.** Based upon the initial data collection efforts of faculty during spring 1999, the GEAC was able to generate a Fall assessment report to assist faculty and departments in their assessment plans for the coming academic year. Visits by the NCA and Iowa accrediting teams were conducted and Kirkwood received renewed accreditation from both groups. Dr. Barbara Walvoord was also invited to return to campus during fall 1999 to conduct additional workshops on PTA scale/rubric construction and to further assist faculty in the formation of an ongoing mentoring program. The GEAC web page was created and launched.

Maintaining Momentum Methods

A number of the faculty who attended Dr. Walvoord's fall 1998 workshop expressed a desire to share the assessment techniques they acquired through participation in her workshops with colleagues across the institution. To maintain this enthusiastic response and the momentum of the assessment process, the GEAC created a PTA/Rubric Mentoring Program in spring 1999. In the initial spring 1999 faculty volunteers Mentoring Workshop conducted one-on-one sessions that assisted their colleagues in the adaptation and construction of assessment tools for use in the classroom. As a result, the mentoring sessions not only enabled faculty volunteers to "think outside the box" when looking at the kinds of knowledge to be assessed by disciplines other than their own; they also built collegiality and helped to dissolve traditional discipline/department barriers.

A second Walvoord workshop was held in fall 1999 to introduce new faculty to the GEAC model and to provide additional training for faculty mentors. Particular attention was given to adjunct faculty issues and adjunct faculties were encouraged to attend and become mentors. Spring 2000 Mentoring Program sessions were organized to assure that a mentor was identified for each department and that ongoing opportunities for assistance will be available for all full and part time faculty.

Coterminous with the creation of a GEAC Mentoring Program has been the creation of a GEAC web page on the Kirkwood Intranet. Kirkwood faculties are encouraged to contribute PTA/rubric models to the postings on the web site and to engage in ongoing dialogue concerning the changes that have occurred in their discipline or department as the result of the assessment process. The web site also acts as an archive for assessment materials produced locally as well as references to resources available elsewhere. The web site has also been a valuable tool for the dissemination of information regarding upcoming GEAC Mentoring Program sessions and data reports that are generated as the result of previous semester data collection efforts.

Conclusions

Maintaining faculty interest and participation in student achievement measurement programs is not a difficulty unique to Kirkwood's institutional assessment initiative. Combining low tech (faculty mentoring workshops) and high tech (an assessment web page on the Kirkwood Intranet) solutions is, however, an innovative approach to fostering momentum in an established program and a solution that has been key to the success of GEAC model at Kirkwood Community College.

References

Kirkwood Community College. 1999. Self-Study. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Kirkwood Community College.

Linda Allen is Assistant Professor of Social Science at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Maintaining Momentum in the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

Appendix

General Education Goals and Objectives
Kirkwood Community College

The general education goals and objectives for Kirkwood Community College that follow represent the desired outcomes of all students who complete a two-year degree program (A.A., A.S., or A.A.S.) at the college.

1) **Students will use effective communication skills.**

   Students will be able to:

   a) write organized, clear, and grammatically correct English, appropriate to purpose and audience.

   b) read a document and demonstrate an understanding of its content, such as by drawing inferences and distinguishing between main ideas and supporting detail and between fact and opinion.

   c) present an organized oral message, appropriate to purpose and audience, using correct spoken English.

   d) listen attentively, respectfully and sensitively to a message and demonstrate an understanding of the message.

2) **Students will think logically and critically.**

   Students will be able to:

   a) develop reasoned and thorough arguments.

   b) analyze the arguments of others, distinguishing fact from opinion and identifying assumptions and inferences.

   c) recognize and value the existence of different points of view.

   d) analyze the conditions of a given problem and design solutions to it.

3) **Students will understand and apply fundamental scientific principles.**

   Students will be able to:

   a) demonstrate an understanding of basic scientific principles.

   b) apply the scientific method.

   c) identify the role of science today.

4) **Students will understand and apply fundamental mathematic principles.**

   Students will be able to:

   a) obtain correct mathematical results with or without technological assistance.

   b) select or develop models appropriate to problems.

c) express models numerically, graphically, and symbolically.

d) identify, interpret and manipulate relevant data.

5) **Students will understand human society and cross-cultural variation and perspectives.**

Students will be able to:

a) demonstrate a knowledge of and respect for United States cultural variety including races, religions, subcultures and ethnicities.

b) demonstrate a knowledge of and respect for global cultural variety including races, religions, subcultures and ethnicities.

6) **Students will have a knowledge of and an appreciation for the human conditions as expressed in works of human imagination and thought.**

Students will be able to:

a) demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of history, philosophy, literature, or the arts.

b) demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human expression on culture and of culture on human expression.

c) recognize the significance of historical context to culture and human expression.

7) **Students will recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.**

Students will be able to:

a) understand and exercise their rights as individuals in a democratic society.

b) understand their responsibilities as individuals in a democratic society and as contributors to the community and society.

8) **Students will possess skills for further learning and the general workplace.**

Students will be able to:

a) select appropriate methods of accessing and evaluating information and data.

b) recognize the importance of punctuality, dependability, and time management.

c) demonstrate basic computer literacy.

d) participate effectively in groups.

e) recognize the value of lifelong learning.

Transforming the Campus Culture: From Faculty Resistance to Faculty Leading the Charge!

Cheryl Knox
Rita Knuesel

Introduction

> The College of Saint Benedict (CSB) and Saint John's University (SJU) are two liberal arts colleges located four miles apart in Central Minnesota. Saint Benedict's is a college for women and Saint John's is a college for men. The students of these two colleges share in one common education, as well as coeducational social, cultural, and spiritual programs....CSB/SJU have a common curriculum, identical degree requirements, and a single academic calendar. All academic departments are joint, and classes are offered throughout the day on both campuses. The academic program is coordinated by the Provost for Academic Affairs, who is assisted by undergraduate academic deans on each campus (CSB/SJU Academic Catalog, p.4).

Our NCA team visit for continued accrediationoccurred in November 1998 on both campuses. Although we were re-accredited, areas needing further attention included general education assessment and assessment in academic departments. A progress report is due in January 2001. This paper describes the activities and realizations that have transformed our campus culture since the NCA team visit.

The Way It Was

Like many campuses today, our faculty resisted the challenge to assess student learning. Some considered assessment an encroachment on their academic freedom. Other faculty saw themselves as the resident experts on their curricula and how best to teach; they considered the PhD to be the terminal degree in assessment and that higher education shouldn't be regulated like elementary, middle, and secondary education. Other claims were that assessment is a waste of time. In some faculty members' minds, the process of assessing bordered on "big brother" overseeing classroom activities; it became an issue of turf and autonomy. Others hoped assessment was a fad. The process of assessment was interpreted as being overly difficult, cumbersome, and complicated on our campuses. We have had to make it simpler and more meaningful. Out of habit and not malice, curricular changes within departments were often based on hunches by faculty based on their own educational experiences and traditions, rather than assessment and program review outcomes. The basic attitude of the faculty was: "We won't assess. Make assessment go away."

In addition to this faculty attitude, we had in place an anemic assessment committee of elected faculty members with no specific assessment expertise or interest in it. Dollars dedicated for assessment were minimal.

Changes

Central to our transformation was a shift in our and faculty understanding about assessment. We have had conversations at various levels about what is assessment of student learning, what are assessment data, and how can we use assessment data to improve the curriculum. We have moved from a focus on faculty teaching to a focus on student learning, and we have come to recognize three driving questions that empowered this shift:

- Do we actually accomplish what we say we do with our general education program and with our specific majors?
- Do our students learn what they should based on our institutional and departmental missions?
- Are curricular changes being motivated by the data that documents student learning?

The following were the key changes we have identified in hindsight as critical:

- We, the academic deans, became highly involved and oversaw the renovation of our assessment processes.
- The academic deans, presidents, and the faculty searched for and hired an interim chief academic officer (provost) with assessment experience. Our new provost immediately arranged for a faculty meeting and set his NCA agenda for the next two years.
- We formed a new Assessment Committee.

  Three senior faculty members with test measurement expertise were chosen by the provost, upon recommendation of the two academic deans, to serve on the Assessment Committee. Three junior faculty members and the director of our general education program were asked to continue their work on the committee. We are deliberately growing our own future expertise of the junior faculty members by sending them to NCA meetings and providing assessment learning opportunities. They will become the second generation of senior faculty with expertise. A critical change is the fact that the provost is also an active member of the Assessment Committee. The provost, one academic dean, and the new part-time facilitator of program review and assessment also became members of the committee. The facilitator of program review and assessment assists the departments by providing research support and comparative reference data. She also centralizes our data filing.

  The Assessment Committee chair was chosen for his expertise in data gathering techniques and his analysis abilities. He immediately uncovered existing data that were not presented to NCA as part of our 1998 self-study. He and the Assessment Committee reviewed and adjusted the assessment plans for general education and our academic programs. They are reviewing available assessment data from departments and monitoring curricular changes to improve student learning resulting from the assessment data. The chair of the Assessment Committee will help write the progress report during the summer of 2000.

- New ownership of assessment initiatives across the campuses emerged by deliberate strategies of communication.

  The chair of the Assessment Committee regularly reports at faculty meetings. The Assessment Committee meeting minutes are posted in a folder for the institutions-at-large. The Assessment Committee chair, the provost, and the two academic deans keep the presidents' cabinet well informed of assessment work.

  The deans selected the first six departments to go through program review in 1999-2000: Economics, Management, Theater, Communication, Gender and Women's Study minor, and Environmental Studies minor. Our program review process is designed to help each academic department or program evaluate and improve its quality and to help the two institutions allocate resources and improve the overall quality of the joint academic programs (Policy for Periodic Review of Academic Departments and Programs, 1999).

  The two deans and the chair of the Committee on Academic Policies and Standards set up rotational schedule of departments going through program review for the next several years.

  The Core Curriculum Committee, the committee that works directly with the general education program, was asked by the provost to conduct review for the general education program. The provost recognized that the committee had representatives from all four divisions (Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, and Humanities) and highly respected senior faculty leaders were already on the committee. The director of our general education program, the registrar, and one academic dean were also recognized as appropriate resources to serve on the committee. The committee launched initial steps for program review of the general education program, which included focus visits with faculty about the first-year symposium program, divisional requirements, and our flag system. Flagged courses are courses that focus on writing and discussion as well as quantitative reasoning and global awareness. A faculty meeting dedicated to general education review was conducted using small group discussion. Committee members served as facilitators for the groups. A December preliminary report was written summarizing what the committee learned for the provost's review. Two more faculty meetings with large group discussions will occur during spring semester. A final report will be written and delivered to the provost during the second semester regarding these initial steps of program review of the general education program.

- Funds were provided for assessment and program review.
- Assessment and program review were linked with our campuses' strategic plan.
- The director of academic planning and budgeting was given the assignment by the provost to do a cost analysis for all programs under review. This is part of our strategic goal to identify and enhance high-value programs.
- Departments will adjust their curricula to reflect the needs identified by assessment and program review data. Programs will be adjusted making them consistent with our mission and institutional values. High value programs will be identified, enhanced, and marketed. An essential element to orchestrating change on our campuses is linking assessment and program review with curricular change and with our mission and strategic plan.

Basics Needed

Our assessment and program review journey has led us to the discovery of the following basic requirements for success:

- Focus on student learning not faculty teaching (Huba & Freed, 2000; López, 1999).
- A common vision from presidents, the provost, deans, and faculty must be developed and owned at-large.
- Respected senior faculty members with expertise in assessment, program review, and curricular revision must be identified, recognized, and invited to serve as leaders and mentors to the community.
- Junior faculty willing to be developed in the area of assessment, program review, and curricular revision must be identified and offered development opportunities. They will become the next generation of respected experienced senior faculty to serve as our future leaders and mentors.
- Appropriate funding for assessment, program review, and curricular revision must be clearly established.
- Time must be allocated to develop and maintain meaningful assessment strategies, program review, and curricular revision. Time equals money and effort. Functional assessment plans necessitate resource commitments, i.e., money and people.

References

College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. *Academic Catalog, 1998-2000.* Collegeville/St. Joseph, Minn.: College of St. Benedict and St. John's University.

College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. 1999. *Policy for Periodic Review of Academic Departments and Programs.* Collegeville/St. Joseph, Minn.: College of St. Benedict and St. John's University.

Huber, Mary E., and Jann E. Freed. 2000. *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

López, C. L. 1999. Assessment of student learning: An update. Paper presented in February 1999 at the Association of American Colleges and Universities working conference, Discovering What Works in General Education, in Tampa, Fla.

Cheryl Knox is Academic Dean at St. John's University (SJU) in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Rita Knuesel is Academic Dean at the College of St. Benedict (CSB) in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Struggles that Staff and Faculty Encountered in Their Implementation of Assessments of Learning and Satisfaction at a Doctoral Degree Granting Institution

Deb Suzzane
James Larson

Identifying the Struggles

The purpose of this session is to share the types of struggles that were encountered by the staff and faculty of a doctoral degree granting institution within five years of having a campus-wide assessment plan approved by the NCA. This session is to include a historical perspective about what was to occur and a current perspective about what seemed to be occurring. The past assessment committee chair continues to chair the Sociology Department at the university, and he will present a historical perspective based on experiences while participating in the planning and first five years of implementing the assessment plan. The past research assistant, now the Director of Institutional Research and Planning at another university, will present a current perspective based on results from interviewing the instructional program chairs during the fifth year of implementing the assessment plan. The issue is that five years after NCA approval in 1993, assessment seemed to be implemented out of alignment with the campus-wide perspective written in the assessment plan, but without formal changes being made.

Defining Assessment Activities

The mission statement of the university was the guiding document for developing assessment plans and instructional program goals. The effectiveness of the institution and instructional programs would be measured by the extent to which the purposes in the mission statement were accomplished. The specific goals for student achievement and development from the mission statement were to:

1) Make informed choices
2) Communicate effectively
3) Be intellectually curious and creative
4) Be committed to lifelong learning
5) Be committed to the service of others
6) Share responsibility for the community and for the world

The six goals for student achievement and development together with instructional program goals were to receive primary attention when considering effectiveness and improvement for student benefit. The measurement of the six goals for purposes of determining effectiveness and need for improvement was to take place through administration and instructional programs.

Administrators' methods for assessing the institution's effectiveness with student achievement and development as well as satisfaction are described by the goals together with the instruments used to measure goal accomplishment. Below are the goals together with the instruments.

1) Make informed choices: cohort study, alumni survey, placement survey, general education portfolios, and the critical thinking study.
2) Communicate effectively: sophomore survey, graduating senior survey, cohort study, alumni study, and general education portfolios.
3) Be intellectually curious and creative: ACE-CIRP survey, cohort study, ACE CIRP follow-up, alumni survey, and placement survey.
4) Commit themselves to lifelong learning: alumni survey and placement survey.
5) Commit themselves to the service of others: ACE-CIRP survey, cohort survey, ACE-CIRP follow-up, alumni survey, and placement survey.
6) Share responsibility for their community and for the world: ACE-CIRP survey, cohort study, ACE-CIRP follow-up, and alumni study.

In addition to the above surveys, the Instructional Development Office used the portfolio technique to work with the faculty of the assessment committee to assess student achievement and development regarding general education and across-discipline education goals. Briefly, the general education and across-discipline goals were that students were to be competent in detecting relationships, thinking critically, and appreciating diversity.

Faculty and chairs of instructional programs used a range of methods to assess effectiveness with student achievement and development that were unique to the instructional program goals. The instructional program assessment of student achievement and development is described by the required assessment plan together with the range of instruments and or data that were used across the 40 instructional programs to measure goal accomplishment. Below are the required assessment plans and the range of instruments and/or data used at the instructional programs.

- **Required assessment plan.** Instructional program faculty and chairs were to write an assessment plan that addressed the extent to which majors were to achieve program goals for learning and development. The plans were also to address how the results of assessment were to be used to improve student learning in the program.
- **Range of instruments and/or data.** The range of instruments is described by the pre-admission, during-program, and post-program times. Pre-admission instruments might include data from high school grade point average, standardized test scores such as the student assessment test, letters of recommendations and student interviews. During-program instruments might include data from traditional exams; professional certification; student grants or publications; student capstone projects; internships; competitions in courses or regional or state settings; writing samples from portfolios, and interviews or surveys before exiting a program. Post-program instruments might include data from placement tests (e.g., GRE); employer or alumni survey results; student placement rates; student career advancement; student recipient of exemplary work recognition; student exit interviews; student generation of research funds; and licensing in the field.

Evaluating the Quality in Implementing the Assessment Plan

The responsibility for ensuring the quality in implementing the assessment plan was delegated to the assessment committee and the Office of Instructional Development. The assessment program was linked to the governance of the university and the university president, provost, and senate appointed members of the committee. Committee members were responsible for portraying a campus-wide perspective while serving staggered terms in their evaluation of the quality in implementing the assessment plan.

The quality in implementing the assessment plan was to be evaluated through three phases. The first phase was to oversee the operations of the institutional and instructional assessments that administrators and faculty implemented. The second phase was to analyze, interpret, write reports, and disseminate the reports to administration, instructional programs, and for committee members. The third phase was to follow up to ensure that administrators and faculty incorporated the recommendations into their implemented assessments. These three evaluation phases were to build quality in implementing the assessment plan.

Acting in Alignment with a Campus-Wide Assessment Plan

Dr. Larson will present a historical perspective regarding the need to act in alignment with a campus-wide view of assessment. The three areas of the historical perspective are:

- efforts expended by an assessment committee made up of faculty, staff, and students to create a campus-wide assessment plan
- decisions made by administration to improve institutional operations separate from operations of a campus-wide assessment plan
- resistance from faculty for implementing a campus-wide assessment plan

Looking at Assessment Quality from the Chair's Perspectives

Dr. Suzzane will present a current perspective regarding the need to involve chairs of instructional programs in decision making about how quality can improve campus-wide assessment. The seven quality criteria of the current perspective are:

1) Leading toward assessment through colleges meetings
2) Discussing data collection for assessment with faculty at the department
3) Recognizing faculty for their assessment efforts
4) Communicating regularly about the why of assessment and its status
5) Reviewing curriculum with instructional and or institutional learning goals
6) Knowing about students and other stakeholders' needs and expectations
7) Using assessment results

During the time of these presentations, staff and faculty will be invited to interact about similar struggles. From this presentation, staff and faculty might find different ways of looking at what types of resolutions to implement and test for usefulness for improvement while (re)planning assessment at their institution.

Deb Suzzane is Director of Institutional Research and Planning at Rogers State University in Claremore, Oklahoma.

James Larson is Chair of Sociology at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks.

Striving for Excellence: A Small College Experiments with Assessment to Improve Student Learning and Strengthen the Curriculum

Diana Brigham Beaudoin
Linda Marie Bos

College Overview

Mount Mary College, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is an urban Catholic college for women sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Faculty and staff are dedicated to the development of the whole person through a program of studies based on the values of the liberal arts coupled with career preparation. More than 1,300 students from a variety of backgrounds attend Mount Mary, representing more than 13 states and many countries. Students can choose from more than 25 undergraduate majors leading to the B.A. or B.S. degree. At the graduate level, five programs provide opportunities for both men and women to pursue advanced degrees and professional growth. In addition to time spent in the classroom, many majors incorporate off-campus educational opportunities such as clinical experiences, internships, fieldwork, and student teaching. The College is known regionally for its academic strength, and students choose to attend Mount Mary because of its excellent academic programs and faculty reputation for fine teaching.

The College mission statement encourages leadership, integrity, and a deep sense of social justice arising from a sensitivity to moral values and Christian principles. Likewise, the vision for Mount Mary College speaks of commitment to creating a diverse learning community that works in partnership with local, national, and global organizations to educate women who will transform the world.

The Imperative for Change

Making the case for assessment and improvement is a common theme on most college campuses today. At Mount Mary College, three primary factors have served as catalysts for assessing what we do to strengthen the institution and better serve our students. First, local and national realities point to a high level of competition in developing and offering innovative academic programs and services in creative formats that meet students' needs and satisfy their desires for convenience and reasonable cost. Aggressive recruiting is apparent for both traditional age and adult students in an increasingly consumer-driven environment. Competing in such a broad market poses special challenges for single-gender institutions of our size.

Second, faculty and administrators are mutually oriented toward collaboration in nearly all endeavors. Additionally, over the last three years a new administrative team of senior officers has gathered and analyzed institutional data, assessed the external environment, and implemented changes informed by the successful experiences and best practices of other institutions. Emphasis on academic and student affairs collaboration to strengthen teaching and learning, program review for all academic departments and programs, and the development of budgeting and fund-raising priorities from a new strategic plan are key examples of new vision and energy being applied to challenges facing the College.

Third, an anticipated reaccreditation visit from the North Central Association in 2002 has promoted an attitude of assessing and improving all that we do. While Mount Mary College has relied for many years on a wide variety of assessment strategies to improve teaching and learning, the impending self-study has helped provide a framework and timetable for moving along at a faster pace than is sometimes possible in a small college with strained resources.

The Shaping of the Leadership Agenda

The reputation for strong academic programs and for preparation of women as leaders dates to the founding vision of the College. The College faculty came to Milwaukee to create a living institution that graduated women who were competent in their field and confident in themselves as leaders. Over the years this idea remained but was not spoken of with the same vigor. The College maintained its emphasis on high standards of competence, but the stress on leadership disappeared from our direct focus and our written documents. How the community at Mount Mary reclaimed it as a unifying element is a story of many twists and turns but each one helped to clarify the vision.

In the 1980s the College had a Long Range Planning Committee that submitted proposals and produced reports but these frequently saw more life on the shelves of the archives than in the hands of those who would implement them. Then in 1992 the leadership of the College decided to move away from a long range planning model to a strategic planning format. In the former a distinct plan is created for a defined period of time. In the latter a vision statement is created from which are drawn direction and implementing objectives. As the objectives are met, they are replaced with new ones, growth is constantly evolving without an artificially segmented timeframe.

To bring the strategic plan into reality the steering team formed twelve Design Teams, groups comprised of faculty, administrators, support staff, students, alumnae, members of the Board of Trustees, the Corporate Board, and the Milwaukee community. The steering committee tried to merge the ideas generated by the teams into a plan during the summer of 1995. The investment of time and effort generated a sincere desire to see a stratagem that they could support, but that is not what emerged from the summer's work. The college community accepted the concepts but rejected the tone and wording of the plan. In October a second plan was accepted. The process was not easy but there was energy and a skepticism generated by it. The former came from a belief that now there would be change. The latter came from the experience of seeing other plans take up residence in the archives.

But this plan moved to implementation. In prioritizing the directives and objectives, one stood out as fundamental to all the others: the need to redesign the internal governance of the College. Again a team created a first draft, which was refined by another group in the fall of 1996. This final plan provided for a separate governing assembly for each of the constituencies–faculty, administrators, support staff, and students. The proposed structure empowered each constituency to create a governing body that would serve its needs and address issues that were of concern to its position in the College. A College Council served as a meeting place to address College-wide issues. Control over the creation of committees and other groups was placed under the control of the respective Assembly or Council. The College community continues to learn and refine this government structure. The experience was important because each constituency had to

- define its role in the College
- take responsibility for efficiently governing itself
- model leadership for each other

In the course of developing the plan we learned the importance of, and role for, the individual and the collective voice. Without initially noticing it, the words leader and leadership appeared more and more frequently in our written communication and in our speech. We as faculty and administrators had to reclaim leadership and learn to model it.

As we moved through the process of implementing more and more of the strategic plan we learned to celebrate our hard work–to recognize that we were creating something special. We also saw that we could spin in multiple directions creating a smorgasbord of activities. The challenge was to find that which bound all the activities together. After reading, discussion with members of the wider Milwaukee community, internal college-wide discussions, looking at the examples of the lived experience of the alumnae, and our own recent experience, we saw the unifying element as leadership. Leadership was an imperative, but to claim it we needed a common understanding of its meaning. A work group drawn from the various constituencies of the College developed a definition of what leadership meant in the Mount Mary context.

The Mount Mary Leadership Model is founded on a well-examined system of moral values based in the Judeo-Christian tradition and includes the following key elements:

- Self-knowledge and competence
- An entrepreneurial sense of vision
- Effective communication skills
- The ability to inspire and strengthen leadership in others

We continue to discuss and refine our understanding of how leadership is a part of all that we are about at Mount Mary College. We wanted to be clear that the form of leadership we defined was not for the few. Rather, it recognized that

- women respond to calls for leadership at varying points in their lives
- women will be leaders in diverse arenas (parishes, parent groups, business, social services, government)
- readiness to lead is part of being a competent woman

Out of the struggles of the last decade we, as a College community, have come to the realization that Mount Mary is reclaiming its original vision. The next step is to integrate it into the classroom and into the lives of the students in a formal way. This has begun through a variety of ways:

- a formal class on leadership
- students in a business management class shadowing women leaders in the community
- students serving on All-College Committees and then chairing respective subcommitees
- luncheon speakers addressing the issue of leadership
- noon panel discussions on leadership issues

The conscious decision to reclaim leadership has changed the question that we, as a community, raise and it has changed the way we assess our students.

Collaboration on Multiple Assessment Activities

Through multiple types of assessment and a shared responsibility between faculty and administration, Mount Mary College is reviewing its core curriculum and academic programs to identify areas of strength and opportunities for reinvesting resources. Propelled by the leadership agenda to better prepare our students and strengthen academic programs with limited resources, collaboration has begun in earnest. The primary challenge, and the key ingredient, to success has been to develop a shared commitment to the leadership agenda by every member of the College community.

- **Assessment Committee established.** Shared responsibility between the faculty and administration for assessing student learning outcomes began nearly three years ago with the creation of an Assessment Committee. Its goal was to have a process in place for assessing student achievement within the core curriculum for entering first-year students in the fall 1998, since these students would be seniors at the time of the next North Central evaluation in 2002. The Committee was guided in its work by the document, "Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning" developed under the auspices of the AAHE Assessment Forum. Students are randomly selected from the incoming class to participate in the project. A portfolio is established for each student that contains samples of her work throughout the year as well as additional reflection papers or questionnaires to be completed by the student to supplement course material. Anonymity is assured for each student participating in the project. At the end of the spring semester, a team of readers, comprised of faculty and student affairs administrators, reads each portfolio to ascertain how successfully the College is fulfilling its expectations through the core curriculum and co-curricular activities. Students remain in the project for all four years of their undergraduate experience. Each fall, a new cohort of entering students is added to the project. The results of the first round of portfolio reading in the spring of 1999 have been most interesting, and the vice president for academic and student affairs and the director of the assessment project have shared results with department chairs to begin the process of using the data for program improvement. Department chairs are interested in how well the College is preparing first-year students and the implications for leadership development on weaknesses discovered in the process of assessing student learning outcomes.

- ◇ **Program review.** In 1996 the College began the important process of program review of each academic department and program. Again a joint venture between the faculty and administration, each area submitted a self-study for its area that included student and alumnae satisfaction with academic programs. Outside observers visited the campus to spend one day with each area and offer invaluable suggestions and recommendations. The institutional research office provided cost data on a per-credit-taught basis for each program. At the end of the review process, the vice president for academic and student affairs met with each academic area and representatives of the Program Review Committee to discuss strengths and weaknesses as well as future goals and directions. Those conversations centered on the question, "What areas of the program need to be strengthened to better prepare women as leaders in the next century?"

- ◇ **Institutional research.** Most small colleges struggle with finding sufficient resources to engage in meaningful institutional research. Identifying trends, gathering and analyzing data, and collecting benchmark information are critical components of the assessment process because they ask the questions, "What were our previous practices and what is our current situation?" And "How does this compare with best practices elsewhere?" To begin to develop an institutional research capability, Mount Mary turned to a semi-retired former registrar of the College, assisted by a mathematics professor wishing to retire but wanting to maintain a half-time workload. The combination of expertise of these two individuals has been ideal, both from the standpoint of understanding the institution and its data as well as the financial resources available.

- ◇ **Specialized accreditation.** It is often a challenge to persuade academic programs that are already subject to review by outside accrediting agencies of the importance of internal institutional assessment. The purposes of these two review processes are quite different, however. While the external review is focused on whether a program meets minimum standards and has adequate resources to achieve them, the internal program review process at Mount Mary College was much more focused on the contribution of the program to the mission of the College and its leadership agenda in preparing our students.

- ◇ **Task Force to Assess Academic Programs.** Most institutions consider the program review process as the final stage of assessing academic programs. Mount Mary College took the process one step further. In October 1999, the president appointed five respected senior members of the faculty to a Task Force to Assess Academic Programs. The charge for the group was to review those programs that had been identified through the program review process as having significant enrollment or quality issues and to offer recommendations to the president for reallocating resources for reinvesting in new programs. The group was given three months to complete its work. The Task Force is nearing the end of its work now, and its deliberations and recommendations are both pragmatic and courageous.

Conclusion

Mount Mary College, as an institution, has learned a great deal about the importance of assessment in creating a student-centered environment that develops leadership skills in women as they go forth to transform the world. While the academic departments, over a decade ago in the late 1980's, were asked to begin reporting their assessment of student learning outcomes, it was not until the late 1990's that leadership as a defining concept began to be explicitly stated as an outcome. Compelled by the imperatives and rapidity of the changing educational environment, Mount Mary College has moved from a passive long-range planning mode to a more strategic-thinking set of goals and objectives with accompanying expectations that everyone be committed to the plan and be actively involved in its implementation. Leadership has re-emerged from our mission statement with a centrality not realized before. The ambitiousness of the strategic plan and the conscientiousness with which faculty and administrators collaboratively undertake multiple assessments has created a partnership that is strengthening the foundation for improving academic programs and services and for preparing our students for the future.

References

Astin, Alexander W., Trudy W. Banta, K. Patricia Cross, Elaine El-Khawas, Peter T. Ewell, Pat Hutchings, Theodore J. Marchese, Kay M. McClenney, Marcia Mentkowski, Margaret A. Miller, E. Thomas Moran, and Barbara D. Wright. 1992. Principles of good practice for assessing student learning. Developed under the auspices of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Assessment Forum. December.

Loacker, Georgine, and Marcia Mentkowski. 1995. Creating a culture where assessment improves learning. In *Making a difference: Outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mount Mary College Assessment Committee. 1998. Proposed plan for institutional assessment of student learning outcomes and educational effectiveness of Mount Mary College. Milwaukee: Wi.: Mount Mary College.

Mount Mary College. 2000. *Strategic plan 2001-2004.* Final draft. Milwaukee: Wi.: Mount Mary College.

Diana Brigham Beaudoin is Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Linda Marie Bos is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of History, Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

QUEST FOR QUALITY
MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 5

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement: Tools of Assessment

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

New Directions in Assessment: Leveraging Technology in the Quest for Quality

Susan Rickey Hatfield
Britt Yackey

Assessment is a journey toward improvement based upon continuous innovation. Through assessment, a university can become self-regarding and self-monitoring. Through continuous innovation, a university becomes self-correcting.

The new millennium presents an unprecedented opportunity for universities to challenge themselves and aspire to reach heretofore unimagined and hence unrealized goals. In this new information age, the source of innovation lies in the technology of information processing, knowledge generation, and symbolic communication. The electronic industry provides for a new intellect that generates knowledge by way of computer mediated structures where electronic tools and human intellect perform harmoniously and in partnership. The result is the rapid evolution of a global perspective where vision, vitality, and values are synthesized into crisp strategies and tactical actions.

Modern database technology can be an equal partner in the university assessment process. With its rich tapestry of data structures and depth in the data content, a new world of opportunity emerges, along with the creative rule-based approach can fine-tune the assessment process, in addition to offering a refreshing new perspective.

Leveraging Technology in the Quest for Quality: eAssessment

Integrated electronic assessment moves a university's assessment efforts away from the collection of data to the creation of knowledge. Combined with a robust analytical engine, the integrated database allows analysis of complex data from which a university can engage in high-confidence innovation and decision-making.

While most universities have collected a significant amount of data, the ability to actually create knowledge is limited by the inability to conduct complex data analyses. Even though university officials have an intuitive sense of the how the data might be related, the data cannot be accessed or analyzed with any degree of efficiency or effectiveness, resulting in basic and unidimensional understandings.

Winona State University recently received a $1.36 million dollar Title Three Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop and implement an integrated electronic assessment database and analytical engine that will assist Winona State University in managing enrollment, increasing retention, and assisting in university decision-making. The database will feature automated www-based assessment modules.

Currently, Winona State University, like most institutions trying to implement an effective quality-enhancing assessment plan, collects a significant amount of data. These data are located in numerous isolated silos, which makes integrating data for complex analyses impossible. This project will allow WSU to create the necessary technological and application infrastructures to integrate these multiple databases, collect new information, and identify the key factors that contribute to the success of our students and our university. By understanding these factors, WSU hopes to design appropriate interventions to facilitate both their students' and Winona State's goal achievement.

FURKON, Inc. (Chicago, Il) is WSU's corporate partner in the project.

As such, though universities are able to gain some insight into the effective facilitators and the quality of their students' learning, that understanding is of limited utility in assisting students or improving the institution because it lacks context and dimension.

A technological infrastructure that integrates the existing campus databases as well as collects additional assessment data in a timely, efficient, reliable, and secure manner adds significant value to an institution's assessment efforts by enabling student-based data analysis, the development of automated, ongoing assessment, and the implementation of intervention strategies.

Student-Based eAssessment

Most university data are reported comparing groups or cohorts of students, generally academic majors or year in school (grade point average of engineering students, satisfaction level of sophomores). This type of data is helpful, but the ability to be able to track individual students adds a vital contextual dimension. In many cases, it is the context that helps translate existing data into information.

This assessment model is based upon the creation and maintenance of individual student datafiles. This student based approach to data collection, storage, and analysis has dramatic implications on university assessment as well as provides a mechanism for universities to promote student success.

To create this type of assessment model, each student's datafile would be created when s/he first applies to the university.

Upon application to the university, a data file is started with the student's admissions information (hometown, gender, high school GPA, class rank, ACT score, college preparatory course profile, date of application, etc.). Upon enrollment, additional data is added to the student's file, such as financial aid/scholarship information, and performance on placement tests. Other information that should be included in each student's data file should include answers to questions such as "Was attending this university your first, second, or third choice?" "When did you decide to attend this university?" "Did neither, either, or both of your parents graduate from college?" "Do you plan on graduating from this university?" "Do you have any siblings who attend/ed this university?" "Will you have a job while attending college?" The answers to these questions provide the context for the additional data that will be collected throughout the student's university career. At the same time, these data create units of analysis, for instance, scholarship recipients, first-generation college students, and legacy admits. In subsequent years, data are added to the student's datafile by the university (academic records) and through student self-report data, such as surveys and inventories as well as general education and major field exams.

Students can also add classroom artifacts (assignments, videotapes) to their datafiles, thereby creating electronic portfolios.

The university can begin to interpret data within the context of the individual students and their specific goals. For instance, a student taking a twelve-credit course load (instead of the standard 15 or 16 credits) during a semester might be problematic if the student has stated a wish to graduate in four years, but might be very reasonable for a student who is working full-time or raising a family and has not set a timeline for the completion of his/her degree. The level of data analysis moves from cohort analysis (average number of credits completed fall semester by first-year students) to analysis based upon individual students (percentage of students who were able to complete their desired number of credits fall semester).

As such, the measure becomes more meaningful because it is based upon students' needs and desired results instead of an aggregate number that implies a certain standard (full time course load) is desired for all. These data also indicate potential gaps in the university's performance by identifying the percentage of students who were unable to fulfill their goals. Investigating why this was the case (creating knowledge) might lead to additional evening class sessions, weekend classes, or more sections of popular courses.

Automated eAssessment

An integrated database and analytical engine moves assessment from a periodic event to an ongoing, continuous set of activities that encompass and engage every student throughout her/his academic career.

As an assessment tool, the database transforms assessment to an ongoing activity, rather than an isolated event. The database can continually monitor student data files and identify students who meet identified criteria (Assessment Points). For instance, students who have earned X number of credit hours or completed a specific course sequence (such as the general education writing sequence). Students identified by the database as having reached an Assessment Point will receive an e-mail with a link to a WWW page that contains the required assessment activity. The data submitted from the assessment activity load back into the database and feedback is also provided to the student. For example, an assessment point could be set up for full-time traditional-aged students who participated in the first year orientation course. Upon completion of the orientation course, students are sent an e-mail with a link to a WWW-based follow-up survey pertaining to the students' expectations of their college experience. The submitted data from the WWW page are automatically entered into the student's data file and available for analysis.

The integrated database will make it possible for students who have reached an Assessment Point to complete WWW-based assessment modules from any computer, anywhere in the world. The submitted data from the WWW page would automatically and immediately be entered into the student's data file and available for analysis. Assessment data will be collected from students who are completing the activity at similar points during their academic careers and compiled and analyzed constantly. At any given point in time, a university will be able to measure our university's and students' performance. Such information will be invaluable in decision making.

eIntervention

As an intervention tool, the analytical engine can be programmed to identify the set of circumstances or events that have been determined through previous data analysis as being indicators of a student at risk (for instance, a student drops two courses within the same semester). Appropriate interventions can be designed to assist those students identified by the database as fitting one or more Risk Profiles.

The interventions can range from relatively unobtrusive (an e-mail to the student and suggesting the student meet with her/his advisor or an appropriate student support office), to interactive (students who have completed 30 credits but have not yet declared a major are linked to an interactive WWW page student-interest inventory that suggests possible careers based upon the student's interest profile).

The analytical engine of the database will allow for multi-dimensional analyses, possibly the identification of patterns in the data that were heretofore invisible.

The ability to conduct complex analyses leads to thousands of possible questions which can now be answered. The integrated database and analytical engine allow the potential for endless knowledge that can help students succeed.

The eAssessment Process

The eAssessment process begins with a trigger event that initiates the assessment period on a campus. Triggers would most frequently be based upon the academic calendar. It is recommended that the initial assessment period last for two weeks, and be proceeded by significant publicity on campus.

Students who do not participate during the initial assessment period are contacted individually by e-mail and given an additional 14 days to respond to the modules. Universities will need to determine appropriate rewards/penalties for student participation/non-participation.

eAnalytics

Through eAssessment, data are added to the database on a regular, ongoing basis, which allows for continual analysis using a set of point-and-click templates. The templates, accessible over the WWW, are available to faculty and staff who can assess cohort level data on students using literally hundreds of data combinations.

The Power of eAssessment—Example 1

One of the biggest challenges facing a university is maintaining enrollment targets through recruiting and retention. Careful analysis of the integrated database allows for multi-dimensional analyses, making possible the identification of patterns in the data that can be used to predict student outcomes. Transforming that data into information and ultimately knowledge data can help universities maximize students' potential for success.

A database built upon student records from both the university and self-report data allows the identification of specific combinations of academic/demographic/assessment variables most commonly found in students who persist to graduation. This Success Profile will allow universities to identify students who have the greatest potential for success (based upon the analysis of the characteristics of persisting students). Students who do not meet the Success Profile would be identified and appropriate support implemented for those students who do not match the profile. For example, if first-generation college students who live off-campus during their first year have a lower retention rate than similarly profiled students living on-campus, guaranteeing residence hall housing to these students might facilitate their persistence.

The success profile also has implications for recruiting, as recruiting materials could be tailored to the specific audience most likely to be successful at a particular institution.

The Power of eAssessment—Example 2

National surveys indicate that between 20 and 30% of first-year students attending public four-year institutions do not return for their sophomore year. Since students need to submit a transcript when they apply to another institution and final transcript when they enroll, it seems logical that keeping track of which schools transcripts had been sent by non-returning students might yield some potentially useful data.

To transform these data into information, additional questions need to be investigated. These include whether students who left the university were receiving scholarships; if they were living on-campus or off-campus; if they participated in the First Year Experience course; and most importantly, whether or not they had originally intended to graduate from the university. All of these factors might influence a student's decision to withdraw from the university or transfer. Integrating these pieces of information would help a university understand more about students and how to help them achieve success.

This information would also help a university tailor interventions appropriate for specific populations of students and prioritize populations for interventions, creating a hierarchy of concern. For instance, it is expected that a student who indicates that s/he does not intend to graduate from the institution will send out transcripts to other institutions. Of greater concern is when a student who had intended on graduating from the specific university starts to apply to other universities. More alarming still is when that student who intended on graduating is in good academic standing or a scholarship recipient when s/he starts to send out transcripts.

The Power of eAssessment—Example 3

Just as there is much that can be learned from studying the characteristics of students who graduate from a university, there is as much that can be learned from those who leave. Data from students who drop out or transfer could also be analyzed to identify the set of circumstances or events that serve as indicators of a student at risk (for instance, a student drops two courses within the same semester). This Risk Profile could serve as a retention tool. Regression analyses of existing data from returning and non-returning students will help identify the specific risk profiles that are relevant to the university's student population. Appropriate interventions could be designed to assist those students identified as fitting one or more Risk Profiles.

The interventions could range from relatively unobtrusive (an e-mail to the student and/or the student's advisor suggesting the student meet with him or her or an appropriate student support office), to interactive (students who have completed 30 credits but have not yet declared a major are linked to an interactive WWW page student-interest inventory which suggests possible careers based upon the student's interest profile), to active (high ability students who don't meet the Success Profile might be pre-scheduled into several classes with the same cohort of students).

eConclusion

eAssessment is designed to be a flexible, adaptable, ongoing system of student assessment. It starts with the assumption that assessment is ubiquitous. However, most universities don't understand the value of the data that they have collected because they are not being interpreted in the context of the student. Patterns that transform data into useful information remain invisible because the means of data storage and interpretation prohibit meaningful analysis.

An integrated electronic assessment structure, built upon sound principles of assessment design, can help universities begin to create knowledge from data that they have collected. An integrated electronic assessment structure can seamlessly integrate different modules that are selected based upon the unique needs and goals of the university and the underlying philosophy of assessment. The integrated nature of the electronic structure allows for the interpretation of data on multiple levels, based upon any number or combination of independent variables, while also allowing for developmental analysis of individual students. This integrated electronic approach to assessment will add value to a university's quality enhancement efforts by providing a student-based context from which to interpret information.

Susan Rickey Hatfield is Assessment Coordinator for Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota.

Britt Yackey is Vice President of Furkon, Inc., in Chicago, Illinois.

Using Electronic Portfolios to Assess Technical and General Education Outcomes

Lisa Larson
Jerry J. Johnson
Beverly Claybrook
Gayle Larson

Assessment techniques in colleges and universities, including those used in technical colleges, are many and varied. The purposes for such assessments may include re-teaching, reinforcement, determination of grades, research, and overall assessment of student learning. Traditional assessment approaches used in technical colleges, as well as in academia in general, include the use of the written test instruments. Examples include true-false tests, multiple choice tests, completion items tests, matching items tests, and essay tests.

But non-test assessments such as evaluation of homework, case studies, problem solving assignments, projects, and observations are also used in colleges and universities. In addition to those listed, much innovation is occurring through the use of portfolio non-test assessment. The portfolio is particularly useful and appropriate for the assessment of student learning in the technical college environment. Bott (1996) asserts that "Educators have even taken a lesson from artists and models and now have students compile portfolios of their work in an attempt to measure ability and progress." Marzano, Pickering, and McTighe (1993) maintain portfolios are "an excellent adjunct or complement to multiple validations" (p.41). López (1996) states that the portfolio assessment is a method of measuring student assessment that has been "found effective by academic units that utilize them (p.13)." An example of putting these philosophies into practice is obtained from Magruder, McManis, and Young (1997) who disclosed in their writing that the Faculty Senate of Truman State University encouraged each program associated with the liberal arts and sciences mission to utilize portfolio assessment of student learning. In other examples, Palomba (1997) reported that Ball State uses a variety of assessment methods, including that of the portfolio, and Hurtgen (1997) reported that the English and History Departments of State University of New York College at Fredonia have engaged in the use of portfolio assessment.

As is the case with other colleges and universities, Dakota County Technical College (DCTC) has, for many years, used the portfolio in several programs to assess and portray student learning. This includes programs such as Graphic Communications, Graphics Design Technology, Interior Design, Photographic Technology, and Architectural Technology. The traditional portfolio historically consisted of a student developed package of worksheets, documents, and models. This traditional package of materials is now being enhanced and in some cases being replaced at DCTC by the development of electronic portfolios. This transition from printed materials to electronic portfolios is occurring, in part, because all DCTC students are being educated in computer literacy skills. This computer literacy goal was established at the December 1997 DCTC Teaching and Learning Technology Roundtable and serves as a functional means for the development of the electronic portfolio. The Roundtable members specified in their strategic planning document that all DCTC program majors incorporate computer literacy as a student learning outcome. It is also relevant to note that cost effective computer workstations and powerful multimedia software are now readily accessible to DCTC's students and thus the development of an electronic portfolio is a reasonable and achievable expectation of them.

The development of DCTC's portfolio assessment is based on information and guidelines found in assessment literature. Bott (1996) describes the traditional portfolio assignment as a collection of many learning experiences over a significant period of time. In layperson's terms, the most common portfolio is that of the photographer who wishes to show his or her completed, polished works to a potential client. Similarly, students in a photography program uses the same approach to demonstrate their best work to a potential employer by preparing a photographic portfolio. Likewise, writers produce tangible products like these of the artist, so writing can be incorporated into portfolios.

Portfolios that incorporate printed documents or drawings as the products are perhaps the most straightforward to produce. In the case of trade programs, such as machinist tool and die and automotive technician, the challenge is more difficult. However, photographs and drawings may be used to some degree for portfolio compilation, and these items can be enhanced by the incorporation of video clips of the student and student products/projects. Also, teacher documentation can be written or recorded on video and/or audio.

Bott (1996) advises that in order to properly evaluate portfolios, individuals other than the primary faculty member should be used. The faculty member should recruit other faculty members, advisory committee members, college administrators, and business/industry representatives to engage in portfolio evaluation. A valid evaluation cannot occur, however, unless the evaluators are given a clear picture of what the student was supposed to be able to do. A limitation on the use of outside evaluators is that they may not be aware of the time and other resources that were available and used by the student to develop the portfolio. In many cases, faculty need to be involved in the evaluation because they have observed the student developing the work and are acutely aware of the skills necessary to complete such work.

López (1996) emphasizes that faculty must establish portfolio assignment and assessment protocols. Such protocols specify what the portfolio will include, how it will be assessed and by whom, and at what time intervals. López has solicited the advice of consultant-evaluators on assessment procedures and practices. She summarizes from this solicitation that a faculty member should not "submit his/her own 'protocol' for evaluating student work in her or his courses since that practice makes it impossible to gather and compare comparable data from area to area and across years" (p. 13). Thus department members must collaborate in the development of protocols that are designed to meet the test of time so longitudinal evaluative data can be yielded. But limitations of longitudinal comparisons exist as pointed out by Banta (1997). She describes potential problems with inter-reader reliability and indicates that the establishment of such reliability is a significant undertaking. In the absence of this reliability, it is not possible to compare accurately student outcomes from one year with those of another year.

Faculty are advised to prescribe portfolio assignments carefully. When given a non-specific assignment to develop a portfolio, students might liberally incorporate an extensive inventory of text and non-text media to demonstrate their abilities. With no restrictions or specifications given to students, Brown and Knight (1994) warn that the portfolio can soon be loaded with a myriad of sample course work materials, reports, correspondence, minutes, video clips, audio tapes, computer printouts, and graphic materials. Such a collection becomes an unmanageable heap of material instead of a well-orchestrated demonstration of student learning. Moreover, cumbersome portfolios may be difficult and perhaps impossible to evaluate. Thus, both faculty and students will be better off if well-established specifications are provided on the range of material that will be incorporated in a portfolio to be used for the assessment of student learning.

As with well thoughout assignment protocols, faculty must establish sound assessment protocols. According to Erwin (1991), protocols for the assessment of portfolios include rating scales and checklists. Rating scales consist of a series of statements that describe a particular aspect of a skill or personal trait. A scale from poor to good is used to rate each item. A checklist is used to rate a series of observable behaviors of a successful performance or product. The student is observed by the evaluator and rated as to whether the behavior exists or does not exist. If criteria are passed by the evaluator, the claim is made that the student has demonstrated that competency. Brown and Knight (1994) advise that when developing evaluative criteria, one must think about what the assessment is trying to achieve. In other words, faculty must focus on what they want students to be able to do or what competencies they are looking for before attempting portfolio implementation to assess student learning. Additional factors for successful portfolio evaluation listed by Erwin (1991) include using more than one observer for rating students and paying careful attention to proper construction of rating scales and checklists.

With these guidelines in mind DCTC has, as stated earlier, embarked on the use of the electronic portfolio to assess technical and general education course work. DCTC's Architectural Technology program faculty have been a critical force in developing this activity.

Architectural technology students have traditionally used portfolios to document their achievements—collecting, selecting, and organizing examples of their work to illustrate their skills for potential employers. The current group of Architectural Technology students is carrying on this tradition but with a twist. Using technology such as digital cameras, camcorders, scanners, and electronic file transfer technology, the students are demonstrating an assortment of skills not possible in a traditional portfolio. In addition to their drawings, students are documenting and demonstrating their technical and general education competencies through the use of video clips of oral presentations, recorded narrative, samples of their writing, and a resume—all on a single CD-ROM.

Students will, of course, be able to use this electronic portfolio to demonstrate their technical competencies to potential employers. Of equal importance, the electronic portfolio will provide a means to document and assess the achievement of goals for both the Architectural Technology technical outcomes and General Education outcomes. A rubric is being developed and refined for use by the student, faculty, and advisory board members to assess these outcomes. Overall, this assessment project is fostering an environment of technical and general education faculty collaboration and teamwork through student mentorship, sharing of information, and the formation of learning teams.

References

Banta, T. 1997. Moving assessment forward: Enabling conditions and stumbling blocks. In *The campus-level impact of assessment: Progress, problems, and possibilities,* ed. P. Gray and T. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T., J. Lund, K. Black., and F. Oblander, eds. 1996. *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bott, P. 1996. *Testing and assessment in occupational and technical education.* Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

Brown, S., and P. Knight. 1994. *Assessing learners in higher education.* Philadelphia: Kogan Page.

Erwin, T. 1991. *Assessing student learning and development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hurtgen, J. 1997. Assessment of general learning: State University of New York College at Fredonia. In *The campus-level impact of assessment: Progress, problems, and possibilities,* ed. P. Gray and T. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

López, C. March 1996. Opportunities for improvement: Advice from consultant-evaluators on programs to assess student learning. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/ Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in Chicago.

Marzano, R., D. Pickering, and J. McTighe. 1993. *Assessing student outcomes: Performance assessment using the dimensions of learning model.* Alexandria, Virginia: McREL Institute.

Magruder, J., M. McManis, and C. Young. 1997. The right idea at the right time. Development of a transformational assessment culture. In *The campus-level impact of assessment: Progress, problems, and possibilities,* ed. P. Gray and T. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palomba, C. 1997. Assessment at Ball State University. In *The campus-level impact of assessment: Progress, problems, and possibilities,* ed. P. Gray and T. Banta. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lisa Larson is Associate Dean of General Education at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemont, Minnesota.

Jerry J. Johnson is Vice President of Academic Affairs at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemont, Minnesota.

Beverly Claybrook is Architectural Technology Instructor at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemont, Minnesota.

Gayle Larson is English Instructor/Self-Study Coordinator at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemont, Minnesota.

Improving Program Quality through Student Outcomes Assessment in the Capstone Course

Edward J. Keeley
Amin Karim
Patrick L. Mayers

Introduction

Many institutions offer academic programs that include a senior project or other capstone experience. Many of these same institutions, however, do not use the information that can be gathered from these courses to its fullest potential, if at all. The capstone course (including senior projects, seminars, and theses, as well as other integrative experiences) offers an ideal opportunity to perform direct measures of student academic achievement, often with fewer resource requirements than may be associated with either standardized testing or portfolio assessments. This paper describes one institution's experience with using capstone courses to provide direct measures of student academic achievement.

Background

DeVry Institute of Technology, a system of 17 campuses and more than 43,000 students, offers programs leading to baccalaureate and associate degrees in electronics and technology-based business curricula. Each baccalaureate degree program includes an integrative senior project, where students work in teams to solve a real-world problem related to their major. This project is often performed for a business or non-profit client, and includes a formal written report and oral presentation describing the problem and the group's solution.

Students demonstrate a wide range of competencies during the course of the project, making the direct measurement of student academic achievement via the senior project (and a companion general education capstone course) a major part of the assessment effort at DeVry, and of the overall continuous quality improvement (CQI) process. Student outcomes assessment at DeVry serves as the "Check" function in the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" model for CQI, which emphasizes the iterative and ongoing nature of the process.

How the Process Works

The first step in the process was for faculty members in each academic program, based on DeVry's mission and purposes, to develop a set of intended learning outcomes and accompanying evidences that the outcomes are being accomplished. The set of outcomes and measures to assess them were derived from faculty in each program asking themselves, "What should a student know or be able to do when he or she graduates from this program?" and, "How should we measure the extent to which they know or can do these things?" Their answers to these questions were compiled and distilled into a draft statement of intended educational outcomes.

The draft statements were reviewed and refined by either a committee of faculty representing all campuses, or by faculty at a series of "pilot" campuses, depending upon the program. The campuses where piloting occurred consisted of entire faculties from those campuses developing a statement of intended outcomes; the resulting documents were then reviewed and revised by faculty at other campuses in the system. The piloting approach was decided upon by the faculty of some programs primarily because of the geographic dispersion of DeVry campuses, but in both cases faculty at each campus and in each program have had the opportunity to develop and/or refine the learning objectives of their programs.

While the faculty role in defining outcomes is central, considerable time and effort in support of the faculty have also been devoted to the process by campus and central academic staff, including deans, chairs, and program directors. These efforts are primarily in the areas of coordination and assistance to faculty in the development and execution of the process and activities necessary to assess the effectiveness of the programs, which are a part of system-wide academic quality assurance at DeVry.

A critical dimension of this process is our perspective that the set of learning outcomes determined by faculty in each program is never truly "final." We often refer to the "final" list of outcomes, evidences, etc., but it would be better to think of the outcomes' status as "current." One of the features of a fully functioning assessment program is the *dynamic* nature of programmatic learning outcomes, especially at an institution like DeVry, which is particularly attuned to responding to rapidly changing needs of employers in business and technology.

Assessing Learning Outcomes

The current set of intended learning outcomes for each program is grouped by *objectives*. Program objectives describe broad student competencies–an objective may have multiple learning *outcomes*, each of which is assessed as to the degree students are exhibiting knowledge, skills, and abilities related to it. Each learning outcome has several *evidences* associated with it, which serve as guidelines for faculty (and other raters) in their assessment of each outcome and *not* as aspects to be rated themselves. In other words, the hierarchy is as follows:

Objective → Outcome → Evidence

For example, the Electronics Engineering Technology program has the following six objectives:

1. Conduct experiments involving electronic systems using modern test gears, interpret test results and use them to improve products or processes.
2. Create and implement high-level and Assembly language programs in support of technical activities.
3. Design, implement, and evaluate hardware and software solutions to complex technical problems using modern tools.
4. Communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
5. Work effectively in a team environment.
6. Apply information literacy and problem-solving skills that support life-long personal and professional development.

Each objective has between two and six outcomes associated with it. For example, objective five ("work effectively in a team environment") includes both "exhibits good dialoguing skills" and "as part of a small group project, when assigned roles, performs roles effectively" as outcomes that are assessed directly in the senior project.

After considering the various measurement alternatives, faculty chose to use the senior project as the site for direct measurement of the learning outcomes they had developed. In addition to being an especially rich source of information for outcomes assessment, a *major benefit* of this approach is that the set of intended learning outcomes becomes the basis for the senior project rating form that faculty and other raters use to assess student competencies in the project. An example of the rating form for the Electronics Engineering Technology program is found in the appendix.

An important issue that arose regarding the relationship between programmatic learning outcomes and the senior projects' subject matter was what to do about outcomes that aren't covered in particular senior projects. With an average of about 20 outcomes to be assessed in each program, not every senior project includes each of them, particularly some of the technical outcomes. It was determined, after thoughtful discussion with program faculty, that *in the aggregate* we would gather enough meaningful data to draw conclusions about what our graduates know and can do in all outcome areas.

Prior to collecting and analyzing the data from senior project ratings, faculty members in each program have determined criteria for success in each of the several learning outcomes. For example, a faculty committee for a particular academic program may set a goal that "80 percent of ratings of object-oriented programming skills will be three or higher" for graduating seniors in their program. It is important that these goals are set *before* results are obtained, and that the criteria are set high enough to be challenging but not impossible to attain.

The Mechanics of Measuring Learning Outcomes

After the rating form has been developed and success criteria have been set, a panel consisting of specialty faculty from the program, general education faculty, and employers sponsoring the senior projects assesses students' knowledge and skills as demonstrated in their integrative capstone experience each term. Reliability has been maximized via the following:

- use of a standard scoring *rubric*, including detailed descriptions of the level of demonstrated competency each rating point represents
- the inclusion of stated, detailed *evidences* that each outcome has been achieved
- *training* of evaluators regarding criteria for success
- measuring consistency of scores among multiple raters (*inter-rater reliability*)

Ratings are collected via a web-based data collection tool that provides for almost instantaneous feedback of results to faculty and students in the program. Comments are also collected electronically, enabling analysis of qualitative rater feedback. Data gathered from the project ratings are aggregated centrally and analyzed both at the campus and system level.

A distinctive feature of the DeVry assessment effort as it pertains to analysis of results is the "federal" nature of institutional research at DeVry. Under the leadership of the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment for the system, there are both strong system-wide and local institutional research and assessment capabilities. At the local level, each campus has staff members who have been trained in the use of SPSS and the DeVry databases. Therefore, each campus has the capability of performing its own analysis on a wide range of data pertaining to assessment. This means that each campus has almost instant access to customizable information that each program's faculty and deans can tailor to meet their analysis needs for improving student performance, satisfaction, and retention.

A Note on Sampling

An important issue in using capstone courses for direct measurement of learning outcomes is deciding how many students to include in the ratings. At DeVry, some program faculty have decided to assess the work of *all* graduates, both to provide representative findings and to provide each student with appropriate feedback. Others, due primarily to size of graduating classes, have opted for a sample of senior projects. Those choosing to sample have wrestled with how to select students for inclusion. While some have opted for simple random sampling methods, others have sought to include projects covering the greatest number of outcomes so as to maximize the utility of the findings. The latter approach must be taken cautiously, so as not to bias the results if projects covering the largest number of outcomes are also performed by the most able students.

Documentation and Follow-up—Closing the Loop

Analysis of senior project ratings and rater comments takes place each term, at each campus, and for each program. Results are compared with the defined criteria for success, and each outcome is considered as to whether it represents a weakness needing mitigation, or a strength to be enhanced and promoted. Further, as term after term of results emerge, patterns and trends are identified. System-wide analysis of findings also aids deans and program directors in determining areas needing improvement and identifying areas of strength.

Involving the entire program's faculty at each campus in the analysis and use of the senior project data is crucial to the success of the entire assessment program. It cannot be stressed enough, however, that the focus of these activities is on improving the program, and *not* on rating or judging individual faculty performance. It has been our experience that one of the greatest faculty concerns is that the data obtained from the senior project and other assessment activities be used *solely* to improve teaching and learning in their programs. By making data from the senior project available to entire faculties at each campus and in each program, and making its use an integral part of faculty activity, the whole notion of assessment and "closing the loop" can become rooted in and made a part of the academic culture.

In addition to senior project ratings, DeVry uses several other direct measures of student learning outcomes and many indirect measures as well. Therefore, findings from the senior project, while a very important part of the assessment effort, are "triangulated" with the findings from other activities to determine the proper courses of action necessary to improve program quality.

The focal point of the *documentation* of DeVry's overall assessment process resides in the program review. Each academic program is reviewed every year at each campus at which it is offered. This review examines multiple dimensions of the program, such as entry measures and characteristics; curriculum; advising; *direct measures of student learning outcomes;* retention and graduation patterns; graduate placement information; and employer, alumni, and student input. The purpose of the program review is to provide for continuous improvement of each program at each campus via the development of an *action plan* to be implemented subsequent to the review. Therefore, *multiple measures* of student outcomes (including the senior project ratings) are examined for each program/campus combination, with the appropriate actions taken on an ongoing basis.

Results are used to improve academic programs both in terms of "how we teach," meaning improving instruction to accomplish current intended outcomes, and "what we teach," meaning changing intended outcomes to match skills required by employers. The multiple measures employed to do assessment at DeVry allow for both kinds of improvement to occur.

The iterative nature of this process ensures that findings and results "cycle back" to inform the development of processes (educational or curricular) and associated actions to correct any areas of concern or further enhance positive outcomes. Just as important is the improvement of the process itself, as well as improving measures and evidences used in the process. As stated before, the timing of the feedback is critical to the success of the assessment process; appropriate feedback received early and often is necessary to improve teaching and learning.

Where We Are in the Process

As of this writing, DeVry has accomplished much of what has been discussed in the previous sections. Every baccalaureate degree program has a set of intended learning outcomes with associated evidences that has become the basis for the senior project ratings. Two of the programs (Electronics Engineering Technology and Telecommunications Management) collected senior project ratings from pilot campuses at the end of the most recent completed term (Summer 1999). These two programs will collect the same data from *every* campus at the end of the Fall 1999 term in February, while all other programs will collect data from their respective pilot campuses at the same time. We will be collecting and analyzing the senior project rating data from all programs at all campuses in the Spring 2000 term.

Preliminary analyses from the pilot campuses have already yielded interesting and useful results. One particularly helpful addition to the process, based on pilot data, has been the commitment by faculty raters to include a comment for any rating of two or lower on a given outcome. The comments have been particularly helpful in determining the specific, detailed reasons for weaknesses in low-rated outcomes.

Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of the process so far has been the strong investment that individual faculty members have made in the success of the assessment effort at DeVry. Faculty at DeVry are passionate about teaching and providing the best experience possible for students, and that passion has translated into their work on assessment of student learning. It has proven to be a team effort in the truest sense among faculty, deans, program directors, and others with a stake in the quality of the academic enterprise at DeVry.

Edward J. Keeley is Director of Institutional Research and Assessment at DeVry Institute of Technology (System Office) in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois.

Amin Karim is Director of Electronics Programs at DeVry Institute of Technology (System Office) in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois.

Patrick L. Mayers is Vice President of Academic Affairs at DeVry Institute of Technology (System Office) in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois.

Improving Program Quality through Student Outcomes Assessment in the Capstone Course

Appendix

EET SENIOR PROJECT RATING FORM (excerpt)

Objective #1 (of 6): *Conduct experiments involving electronic systems using modern test gears, interpret test results and use them to improve products or processes.*

Outcomes	Ratings (0-4)	Evidences	Weaknesses / Suggestions for Improvement
1. Performs Needs Analysis – defines the problem		• Identifies the problem to be solved • Identifies tests needed to isolate the cause of the problem or to provide additional information toward solving the problem	
2. States goals and objectives of the experiment		• States objectives of the investigation • States how the investigation will help toward problem solution	
3. Identifies resources to conduct experiment (parts, equipment, data sheets, etc.)		• Identifies instruments, parts, software, etc. needed to set up the test • Draws any schematic diagrams, flow charts, etc. of the system to be constructed • Collects any technical data sheets, equipment manuals, etc. as needed	
4. Develops a procedure and collects data using modern test gears		• Plans stages of operation • Plans the sequence of tests to be performed • Conducts tests and gathers data	
5. Analyzes test results and draws conclusions		• Analyzes test results and their usefulness toward solving the problem • Uses the results toward solving the problem • Isolates and identifies errors and malfunctions • If further tests are necessary, proposes and carries out the same	

Rating Scale:

4 = Outstanding: outcome achieved and demonstrated with no errors (evidence of high quality completed work)

3 = Good: outcome achieved and demonstrated with no significant errors (evidence of good quality completed work)

2 = Fair: outcome achieved and demonstrated with occasional errors (evidence of mediocre quality completed work)

1 = Poor: outcome poorly achieved and with significant number of errors (evidence of poor quality completed work)

0 = Fail (evidence of poor quality incomplete work)

Creating a Sophomore Capstone Experience in the Community College

Victoria Jensen
Alan Wenzel

Introduction

Highland Community College began its assessment of student learning with the general education component of its degree programs in 1995. Faculty identified six general education outcomes and worked in committees to develop competencies for each outcome. Competencies were identified as cognitive or affective. The guiding principle behind the development of the outcomes and competencies was the search for a true characterization of the successful student at the completion of his or her Highland education. Discussion of assessment methods and instruments was postponed until the outcomes and competencies were completed.

In the fall of 1997 the college implemented a standardized assessment of general education, the College Outcome Measures Program (COMP) from ACT. A committee of faculty developed an additional survey to assess the values and beliefs included in the general education outcomes and competencies. Each of these measures was designed to be administered as both a pre-assessment for incoming freshmen and a post-assessment for sophomore students completing their general education core courses.

It became increasingly clear that assessment of a significant proportion of the outcomes and competencies could not be accomplished by a standardized instrument or a survey. After much discussion and consultation, the college's Assessment Committee committed to the creation of a sophomore capstone course.

The Project

A group of faculty and administrators was formed to begin general discussion of the shape and content of the course. The initial concept was to observe students in a seminar-like context as they identified issues, discussed them in some depth, researched additional information, and finally produced individual projects that synthesized ideas and information in quality oral and written presentations. The capstone nature of the course would be the opportunity for students, as they pursued the development and completion of their projects, to bring together and apply the knowledge and skills learned across their general education curriculum. This would be the capstone of their community college education and also a foundation for their transition to the world of work or to a baccalaureate-granting institution. As the concept began to take shape, the general education outcomes and competencies applicable to the capstone course were listed and became a guiding influence in the development of course content.

As discussion continued, important issues became evident.

The Issues

◇ **The dual purpose of the course.** The primary purpose for the course was to contribute to the assessment of student learning in the general education core curriculum of the college. However, there was great concern that the experience should have direct benefit for the students as well. Meeting each of these needs in a coherent and reliable manner became a challenge as the course was created.

◇ **The construction of the course.** Issues of credit, grades, and articulation and transfer needed to be determined in the context of the dual purpose for the course. Although no direct instruction was to occur, it was assumed that learning would indeed occur as students worked to meet the requirements.

◇ **The role of the instructor.** Since the course was to provide evidence of student learning, or conversely evidence that students had not learned the desired knowledge and skills, the role of the instructor needed to be defined and limited. Lengthy discussion occurred about the line between instructing, and thus developing in the students new knowledge and skills, and providing a catalyst that would allow objective observation of learning that had occurred.

◇ **Evaluation of the projects.** Initially it was believed that students should pass the course regardless of performance since little instruction would occur. Additional concerns centered on the extent of instructor feedback to students as each project was completed.

◇ **The significance of the results.** The student population for the course would be small and the data collected would be instructor observations and evaluations. Nevertheless, it was hoped that the results would establish a valid basis for a campus-wide discussion of improvements in the college's curriculum.

The Capstone Course

Highland Community College offered an eight-week two-credit Capstone Course spring semester 1999 to fourth semester full-time students who had completed approximately three-fourths of their general education requirements with courses from across the curriculum. The course was tuition-free, and upon completion students received a cash stipend from a privately-donated scholarship fund. Three sections limited to 12 students were facilitated by two instructors each. The course was successfully articulated with the requisite three Illinois universities and therefore qualified as elective credit toward a Highland degree.

Students were informed of the dual purpose of the course during recruitment. The importance of the students' role in assessment was presented to them as well as the opportunity to synthesize and apply their general education knowledge and skills prior to transition. Included in the course as required projects were a career unit and a personal portfolio that would directly benefit the individual students as they pursued employment or transfer.

The syllabus reflected the outcomes and competencies to be evaluated as students completed four projects. The students were to demonstrate the extent to which they could engage in informed discussion of personal, professional, social, and global issues; gather, analyze, and synthesize data; make effective oral and written presentations; work in collaborative groups; and critique and evaluate their work and that of others.

A series of rubrics was developed to assist instructors in the evaluation of the projects, and students were required to develop their own rubrics for critiquing projects. Letter grades would be awarded as projects exceeded expectations, met expectations, or failed to meet expectations.

Instructor packets included a clarification of the instructor role: to involve the students in a series of activities that would require them to demonstrate specific general education outcomes and competencies. The instructor was expected to motivate and inspire students to engage enthusiastically in the assigned work, to answer specific questions, to observe classroom action and keep a log of observations, to evaluate student work according to the rubrics, to mentor and collaborate rather than instruct, and to monitor the group processes and make changes if necessary.

Instructors for the course agreed that those observations that were consistent across sections and for all students and all projects would be sufficiently valid for faculty discussion leading to change in the general education curriculum. It was not deemed critical that the capstone experience was unique and not linked directly to a pre-assessment or specific courses or methodology in the curriculum. The contribution to the assessment initiative was not to determine value-added during the Highland experience but rather to assess student abilities upon exit from the institution.

Results

The six instructors for the course included three tenured faculty members–one each from natural science, fine arts, and speech/communication. Three administrators, including two academic deans, completed the team. Three of the instructors also serve on the Assessment Committee.

The instructors reported their conclusions to the administration and faculty. They found the students able to make independent decisions and quality oral presentations. They were strong group members, able to organize to reach shared goals and be respectful and inclusive with other group members. Finally, their ability to design and communicate individual and collaborative projects was acceptable.

However, students did not demonstrate strong research skills, strong writing skills, an ability to select and integrate numerical data, or an understanding of critique as a means to evaluate and improve their work.

Faculty were asked to compare the conclusions reached by the capstone instructors to their experiences with their own students and to discuss needed additions to the delivery of the general education curriculum. The faculty response was nearly unanimous, concurring with the conclusions from the capstone assessment. They have begun to pursue several campus-wide initiatives to address the noted weaknesses in student performance.

Finally, the students who completed the course were asked to evaluate its structure and its value to them. They were generally enthusiastic about the experience and several of their recommendations have been incorporated into the course scheduled for spring semester 2000. The instructors for the course also provided a list of recommended changes in the delivery of the course. However, the basic concept and format for the capstone experience has been judged successful and will continue to play a role in the assessment of student learning at Highland Community College.

Conclusion

Highland Community College's Assessment Committee committed to academic assessment as it "provides a formal structure/catalyst for campus-wide dialogue and discussion of student learning and instructional excellence." The capstone experience and the resulting observations have met that end. Faculty have embraced the challenge and have begun a healthy, constructive process to strengthen the curriculum. The capstone experience will continue to play an important role in assessment as changes are made to the general education curriculum. Additionally it will continue to provide a unique educational experience for community college students to synthesize and apply their general education knowledge and skills prior to transition.

Victoria Jensen is Dean of the Learning Assistance Center at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois.

Alan Wenzel is a professor of Speech/Communication at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois.

Assessing the "Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination"

Allen Jaisle
Bruce Francis

This presentation will share the experience of Capella University in identifying, applying, and assessing ten Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination, which are fundamental learning goals and processes for learners in a new upper division baccalaureate program. The ten thinking habits and their rationale will be explained. The assessment criteria, strategy, and practice to promote learning of the ten thinking habits will be presented. Participants will then engage in an active learning experience to apply and assess their own thinking habits.

Learning How-To-Think in the 21st Century

Learning how-to-think has always been an important goal of higher education, in addition to the what-to-think knowledge content of a curriculum. Rapid change in the 21st century will greatly shorten the useful life of what-to-think specific knowledge content, and therefore increase the importance of learning how-to-think effectively to meet new challenges. This means that all of us in higher education must become much more explicit in identifying, applying, and assessing the higher order and longer lasting thinking habits needed by graduates in the first decades of the 21st century.

Capella University has identified the ten Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination, described in Figures 1 and 3, as essential for knowledge professionals in the new century. The thinking habits constitute the enlivening genetic code for Capella University's new online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. Capella University is using these thinking habits to design learning experiences in the curriculum that will promote both the learning of specific knowledge content and the development of first-rate thinking habits.

Figure 1 - Comparison of 21st Century Thinking and 20th Century Thinking

New Thinking Habits -	***Old Thinking Habits -***
Complementary Thinking	Either/Or Dualism
Connected Seeing	Fragmented Thinking
Collaborative Action	Competitive Zero-Sum
Constructive Inquiry	Knowledge Transfer
Conceptual Precision	Ungrounded/Unclear Abstraction
Creative Languaging	Language/Media Assumed Innocent
Courageous Enactment	Ambiguity Unacknowledged/Feared
Caring Empathy	Emotional Disconnect
Conversational Reflection	Mute Non-Reflection
Continuous Learning	Learning as Admission of Inadequacy

The North Central Association evaluation team commented in their report on the use of the thinking habits in the new degree program as follows:

> One of the innovative hallmarks of the proposed program is the Ten Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination that are intended to permeate the curriculum... Conceptually, they provide a scaffolding for developing metacognitive thinking in every learner in every course in the program. They also lend a coherence so often lacking in an undergraduate curriculum, and they create a vehicle for extending the goals of general education throughout the curriculum.

Thinking Habits Needed by Knowledge Professionals

The quality of thinking in the 21st century must be different from and better than the typical thinking of the 20th century, because the challenges are now more complex, more interconnected, and more dynamic than in the past. Figure 1 summarizes the New Thinking Habits needed by knowledge professionals in the 21st century, as compared to the Old Thinking Habits that have been commonplace in the 20th century.

Digital World—Rationale and Metaphor for Thinking in the 21st Century

The thinking habits, which Capella University has identified as desirable for 21st century knowledge professionals, are ultimately derived from the emerging metaphor of a Digital World. Each of the ten thinking habits has its own rationale, but they all derive from the same composite metaphorical image or worldview. Our reality has now become a Digital World.

This worldview is equal parts Internet and ecology, which historians may well conclude were conceived in the same year. In 1969 humankind first saw the Earth as a unified whole living ecology from a new vantage point, the Moon. In 1969 the predecessor of the digital global intelligence system of the Internet began life as ARPANET, a defense-university computer communications system. At about the same time, the microprocessor began to vastly expand computer power. Using powerful computer graphics, we began seeing anew the dynamic, complex, interrelated, and living nature of the fabric of the universe. A new worldview has begun to emerge, revealing a new reality, in both the public and the scientific mind. Figure 2 shows an image of this emerging worldview metaphor of reality, the Digital World.

Figure 2 - Digital World - 21st Century Metaphor of Reality

Digital
World
1010101010

Digital World -

Composite Metaphorical Image to
Guide Thinking in the 21st Century

Where:

Digital World = Internet + Ecology

Internet = World Wide Web Social-Technical System

Ecology = Dynamic Web of Life of the Universe

All the thinking habits have a family relationship to the Digital World. Some important considerations guiding our identification of the thinking habits that derive from the Digital World worldview include:

- **Holistic and interconnected.** Learning, like reality, is best understood as making connections and appreciating the significance of relationships. Synthesis needs to be given new emphasis.
- **Fluid and open universe.** Learning, like reality, needs to open minds to new possibility, not just focus on the closed possibilities of the past and the already known.
- **Alive and dynamic.** Learning, like reality, needs to be understood as alive and dynamic. Ample room for constructing new knowledge and understanding needs to be provided.
- **New sciences of complexity.** Learning, like reality, needs to be understood in and engaged by a new scientific paradigm, including: chaos theory; complex adaptive systems; general systems theory; and

ecological systems. [A very readable exposition of this theme is in the book Chaos and the Evolving Ecological Universe by Sally J. Goerner, 1994]

- ◇ **Ethic of Collaboration**—Learning, like reality, needs to be understood as intellectually, emotionally, and practically nurturing; learning founded on the ethic of collaboration and mutuality, within which competition and individuality serve useful but tempered roles.
- ◇ **Language as Creative Force Sculpting Reality**—Learning, like reality, needs to be understood as mediated and created, in large measure, by the symbolic language used to describe, engage, and participate in the world.
- ◇ **Digital Computer/Communication Media**—Learning, like reality, needs to be understood as being profoundly shaped by the medium of communication and the relationships it creates. Where is Marshall McLuhan, media prophet, when we really need him in the Internet era?

Assessing the Thinking Habits of Heart, Mind, and Imagination

The Learning Assessment Criteria for the thinking habits, along with definition of each thinking habit, are presented in Figure 3. These assessment criteria will guide learners and faculty in developing the thinking habits throughout Capella University's new online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree program. Evidence of development of the thinking habits will be assessed in a variety of ways including:

- ◇ Learners will carry out a pre-course assessment of their understanding and perceived level of attainment on each of the ten Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination.
- ◇ At the end of the course, learners will complete an online post-assessment indicating:
    - ○ Learners' new level of development on the thinking habits;
    - ○ Specific events in the course that demonstrate their development;
    - ○ Suggestions for ways the thinking habits can be better presented.
- ◇ Learning Portfolios will be assessed across courses by a faculty committee to determine and enhance the development of the Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination. Criteria related to the joy of learning as manifested in the curriculum will be assessed by a faculty committee as well. In addition to providing feedback to the learner about his/her development, committee Learning Portfolio reviews will be used to assess overall effectiveness of the curriculum.
- ◇ Faculty will use the thinking habits as an evaluation rubric, to guide grading of assignments and to focus coaching on the quality of thinking in the conduct of future assignments.

Active Learning Experience—An Opportunity to Explore Thinking Habits

Experience the Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination by meeting the following challenge:

- ◇ **Challenge.** The assignment, in Figure 4, is to collaboratively construct a set of ideas, in this example, to guide the purchase of a vehicle. This is a subject area most of us are familiar with and probably have strong personal views on. First choose a partner for the exercise.
- ◇ **Separate idea generation.** Two learners separately list the primary ideas that typically guide their preferred approach to purchasing a vehicle.
- ◇ **Personal metaphor.** Each learner invents a personal metaphor concisely expressing his/her approach to the challenge–the learner's point-of-view on vehicle purchase.
- ◇ **Collaboratively constructed ideas.** Dialogue between learners to collaboratively construct a set of ideas on the challenge. Make an effort to use the creative tension between the different points-of-view to enrich and expand the collaborative set of ideas.

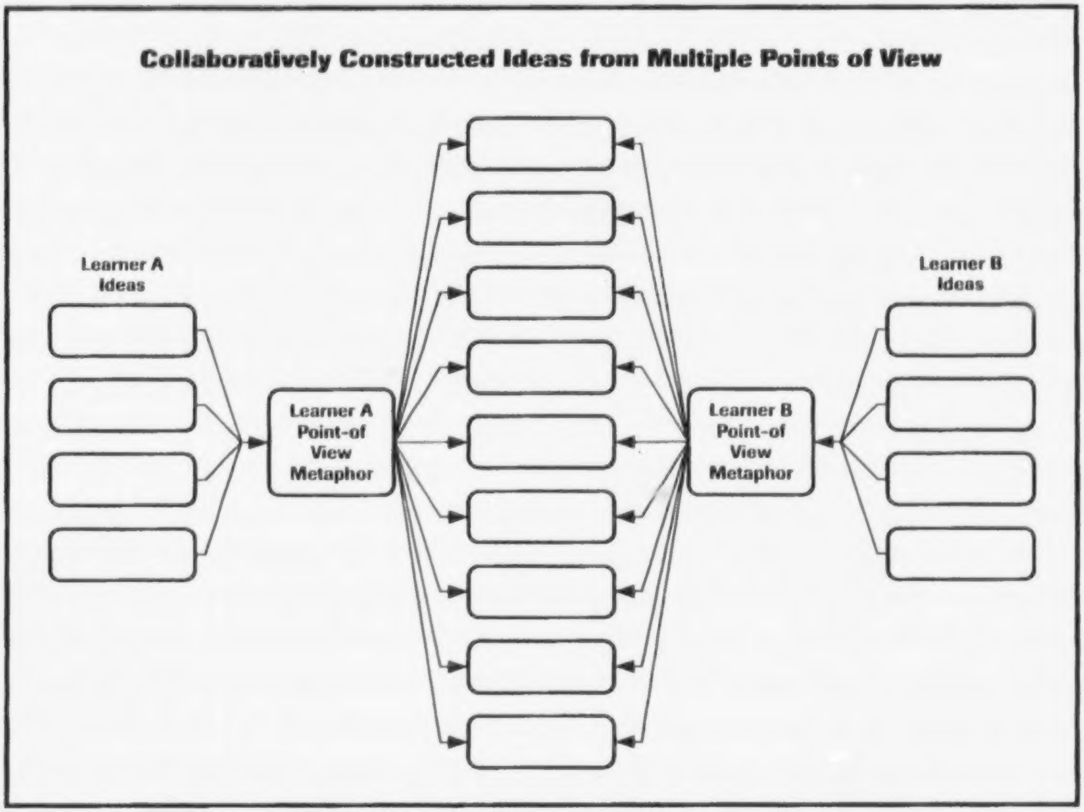
Figure 3 -Thinking Habits and Learning Assessment

Thinking Habits	**Learning Assessment Criteria**
TH1: Complementary Thinking The habit of thinking that integrates multiple perspectives into an integrated understanding of many-sided truths.	*Polar-Opposite Complementarity* – Learner identifies relevant opportunities for meaning through complementary polar-opposites. *Multi-Perspective Complementarity* – Learner identifies relevant opportunities for meaning through non-polar multiple perspectives. *Complementary Meaning Making* – Learner competently uses complementarities to make significant new meaning and discovery
TH2: Connected Seeing The habit of seeing, knowing, engaging and creating the world of reality, as a seamlessly connected web-of-life.	*Seeing Relationships* – Learner sees relationships and wholeness most relevant to understanding the system ecology being addressed. *Seeing Significance* – Learner explains and uses relationships and wholeness in the system ecology to make significant meaning. *Seeing Across Disciplines* – Learner sees relevant relationships and wholeness across knowledge domains to make significant meaning.
TH3: Collaborative Action The habit of acting collaboratively–combining individual initiative and group cooperation–to accomplish common purpose.	*Creativity in Collaboration* – Learner actively searches for and creatively invents collaborative approaches to the challenge. *Collaborative Dialogue* – Learner communicates in a 'collaborative genre' in written-email-spoken communications of trust and mutuality. *Collaborative Responsibility* – Learner exercises responsibility to take initiative, cooperate and fulfill personal-group commitments.
TH4: Constructive Inquiry The habit of constructing knowledge and meaning by group and individual inquiry, using the insights of many diverse sources to enrich understanding.	*Acquiring Explicit Knowledge* – Learner actively acquires relevant explicit knowledge by collection and analysis of explicit information. *Accessing Tacit Knowledge* – Learner actively accesses relevant tacit knowledge by personal interview, experience and introspection. *Synthesis of Whole Knowledge* – Learner creatively synthesizes whole knowledge, combining explicit and tacit knowledge of self and others.
TH5: Conceptual Precision The habit of thinking clearly from first principles–using reason, experience and emotion–to consider the known, unknown and unknowable.	*Clarity of Concept* – Learner expresses relevant concepts clearly in writing and in concept maps, including related concepts and implications. *Clarity of Rationale* – Learner expresses the rationale for concepts by reasoning from first principles, incorporating relevant experiences. *Clarity of Wholeness* – Learner strives for wholeness in conceptual thinking by balancing reason of the mind, with heart and imagination.
TH6: Creative Languaging The habit of opening new worlds of understanding, by the creative use of language, including languaging in hypermedia of computer-mediated communications.	*Language Awareness* – Learner recognizes and uses the influence of both descriptive and metaphorical language on perception, thought and action. *Languaging Leadership* – Learner exercises languaging leadership, in generative word choice, metaphor, image and other languaging. *Hypermedia Languaging* – Learner uses the unique power and quality of hypermedia to enhance and transform professional communications.
TH7: Courageous Enactment The habit of making sense of ambiguity, by courageously inventing meaning and taking action based on ambiguous experience.	*Ambiguity Awareness* – Learner recognizes the relevance, occurrence and significance of ambiguity inherent in personal and professional situations. *Enactment of Reality* – Learner invents meaning out of the ambiguous to create reality, by sensemaking, actiontaking and theoryauthoring. *Courage of Commitment* – Learner evidences courage and emotional resilience to make commitments, take action and accept responsibility.
TH8: Caring Empathy The habit of identifying with and caring for others and their worldviews as the basis of wise and effective action.	*Self-Other Unity* – Learner evidences understanding and capacity to regard the polar-opposites of self-other as a complementary unity. *Stakeholder Perspectives* – Learner recognizes the dignity and legitimacy of all stakeholders and can see and feel in their worldviews. *Intellectual and Emotional Maturity* – Learner integrates the mind, heart and imagination to inform empathy and ethics in relationships and actions.
TH9: Conversational Reflection The habit of reflecting in conversation on the experience of professional practice, in a learning spiral of acting, conversing and thinking.	*Believing Game* – Learner is first 'open to believing', to learn from encounters with new ideas, experiences, developments and challenges. *Doubting Game* – Learner is second 'open to doubting', to learn from new encounters after having learned as much as possible from believing. *Re-Storying by Languaging* – Learner uses languaging for reflection on new learning and prior experience to write a new story of meaning.
TH10: Continuous Learning The habit of learning continuously over a lifetime–learning in failure and success, learning by curiosity and intention.	*Learning in Failure* – Learner is able to learn from failure by seeing failure with courage, as the gift of an unexpected learning experience. *Learning in Success* – Learner is able to learn from success, by seeing success with humility, as the gift of an unexpected learning experience. *Intentional Learning* – Learner is intentional in learning, by planning formal and informal learning for personal and professional development.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- ◇ **Review Thinking Habits.** Review and assess the thinking habits learners used to meet the challenge, by referring to each of the ten Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination defined in Figure 3. Discuss how many of the New Thinking Habits you used.

Figure 4 - Active Learning Experience:
Applying and Assessing the Thinking Habits


Collaboratively Constructed Ideas from Multiple Points of View
Learner A Ideas
Learner A Point-of View Metaphor
Learner B Point-of View Metaphor
Learner B Ideas

For further information on the Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination contact Allen Jaisle at ajaisle@capella.edu, Bruce Francis at bfrancis@capella.edu, or http://www.capellauniversity.edu/.

Allen Jaisle is Associate Dean, School of Undergraduate Studies, Director, New Program Development, at Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Bruce Francis is Chancellor at Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Implementing Performance Assessment in the Major

Miriam Q. Williams
Cheri Shakiban

Performance Assessment

Performance assessment focuses on a student's ability to use acquired knowledge, skills, and values to produce a pre-specified level of performance. Among faculty in a major, the key question of performance assessment is "Can a student, towards the end of any degree program, demonstrate, through production (e.g., capstone paper, an exhibition, presentation, or exam, etc.) the level of knowledge, skills, and values that is necessary to be considered a competent well-educated graduate in that program?" The asking and answering of this question should be a core component of an assessment plan for a major.

Good assessment practice requires that any assessment plan for a major incorporates three focuses. These are cognitive (knowledge), behavioral (performance), and attitudinal (values and attitudes). A well designed performance assessment measure will incorporate all three focuses. It will require students to use knowledge (cognitive) to produce a product (behavioral). Values-oriented aspects (attitudinal) can also be considered if they have been a focus of the major and are included as performance criteria on a Primary Trait Analysis (PTA). The PTA is used to assess the performance of a student. It will be described later in this article.

Steps for Performance Assessment

Performance assessment–also called authentic assessment (Nichols, 1995); criterion-referenced assessment (Freeman and Lewis, 1998; Johnson and Johnson, 1996); and criterion-based evaluation (Banta et.al, 1996)–is based on the specification of criteria that are necessary components of excellent accomplishment. Several steps are involved in the development and implementation of performance assessment.

1. The faculty as a whole need to agree on what sample of student production would enable them to most clearly measure competence in students' knowledge, skills, and values. They should choose only one sample to start the process. Others can be added later once they have gained experience in this technique.

2. Once the type of sample has been identified, e.g., an exhibition, an oral defense of a paper, a project plan, etc., the faculty need to determine if it is possible to embed this sample into a senior-level capstone course or if it must be incorporated as a passage or requirement for graduation.

3. The faculty as a whole needs to discuss and agree upon criteria that are necessary for excellent performance. What key knowledge, understandings, skills, and values should be evident in excellent performance? Once these criteria are specified, the faculty then needs to define for each criterion at least two other levels of accomplishments, which are "acceptable" and "non-acceptable" performance. The PTA method is a tool that will make this step easier for faculty. Explanation is provided later.

4. The faculty, now that it has defined criteria and levels of accomplishment, should identify where in the curriculum (required/elective courses and student experiences) the performance criteria are developed. For example, in what course is an understanding of research design developed? And where do students develop the ability to defend a philosophical position? A curriculum matrix is a tool that faculty can use to do this. It is explained later.

5. The faculty should inform students, early in their study of the major, of the overall assessment plan for the major. It should also share information as to what performance will be assessed and the criteria that will be measured.

6. The faculty should set up a schedule for carrying out the performance assessment and plan when the results will be discussed.

7. When conducting the performance assessment, faculty will use a PTA that was developed in step 3. At least two faculty will independently evaluate every performance sample. They will discuss and compare their results. Wide discrepancies in ratings mean very poor inter-rater reliability and can mean a lack of understanding or agreement on criteria. The raters and the faculty as a whole may need to discuss such discrepancies.

8. The overall ratings of the student performances and the specific ratings of particular criteria should be discussed by the faculty. Overall higher ratings should be celebrated. Low ratings should lead the faculty to use the curriculum matrix to decide where enhancement or revisions to the curriculum might be necessary.

Tools to Assist Faculty

The primary trait analysis method and the curriculum matrix are two tools that assist faculty to develop and implement performance assessment.

☐ Primary Trait Analysis (PTA)

PTA (Lloyd-Jones 1988) is used to set-up a scoring rubric that is employed by faculty to determine if student performance exhibits the required criteria. An excellent source on PTA is *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment* (Walvood and Anderson, 1998). Included in this resource are many examples of PTAs from a variety of academic disciplines.

An effective and fun way to introduce faculty to the development and use of a PTA is through a structural learning experience. In a short workshop on performance assessment, faculty in small groups of five-six can develop a PTA to judge the "performance" of a chocolate chip cookie. Faculty through this experience usually encounter the strengths and weaknesses of the PTA approach. Among the insights they may have: 1) it is possible to measure non-essential criteria and 2) not all criteria should receive equal value. Key criteria should be weighed. Often this experience intrigues faculty and leads them to explore the development of a PTA for their major.

☐ The Curriculum Matrix

The Curriculum Matrix is a tool that assists faculty to identify where in their curriculum, specific skills, knowledge, and values are introduced and developed. If it is found through performance assessment that specific skills, knowledge, or values are not being well developed, the matrix assists the faculty to identify where possible changes in the curriculum could occur. Developing a curriculum matrix for a major is an activity that should involve all faculty.

Along the left side of the matrix, all major outcomes are listed. Along the top, all courses–required and elective–are listed. The faculty through discussion indicate where a concept, skill, knowledge, and/or value is introduced, developed, or advanced. The matrix can serve other purposes. It can be used: 1) to orient new faculty; 2) to alert adjuncts as to where their course fits within the curriculum; 3) to advise students; and 4) on a yearly basis to discuss the results of assessment and what changes in the curriculum might strengthen student performance.

Summary

Performance assessment can be rewarding for faculty as they can actually measure, through student performance at the end of degree program, the impact of their united effort (the curriculum) on students. Performance assessment functions best if the faculty in the major work together to design and implement it. The tools described in this article will assist faculty in their effort.

References

Banta, Trudy W., Jon P. Lund, Karen E. Black, and Frances W. Oblander. 1996. *Assessment in practice: Putting principle to work on college campus.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Freeman, Richard, and Roger Lewis. 1998. *Planning and implementing assessment.* London: Kogan Page, Ltd.

Johnson, David W., and Roger T. Johnson. 1996. *Meaningful assessment through cooperative learning.* Edina, Minn.: Interaction Book Company.

Lloyd-Jones, R. 1977. Primary trait scoring. In *Evaluating writing: Describing, measuring, judging,* ed. C. Cooper and L. Odell. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English.

Nichols, James O. 1995. *A practitioner's handbook for institutional effectiveness and student outcomes assessment implementation.* New York: Agathon Press.

Miriam Q. Williams is Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Cheri Shakiban is Chair of the Mathematics Department at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Enhancing Faculty and Staff's Ability to Make Quantitative Decisions: Exploding the Usefulness of Assessment Data

Don Lind

Introduction

Student academic assessment is a process that is here to stay. Colleges and universities throughout the nation are currently in varying stages of gathering data and attempting to discern its meaning. Dr. Cecilia López, Associate Director with North Central, identified three factors that tend to lessen the impact of the assessment process in many institutions.

The first of these factors is a basic misunderstanding concerning the purpose and nature of academic assessment. The second, emotional based resistance by many involved in the process. Third, inadequate information and skills needed to conduct assessment. This writer would like to add a fourth consideration to this problem. This would be the small number of faculty who actually see the data and the inability to view the data from different perspectives.

A Diamond in the Rough

All too often within colleges and universities, the data collected pertaining to student academic achievement are similar to a diamond in the rough. Such data tend to be gathered, centralized, and compiled by a few people for reports sent to a handful of administrators and faculty. Many times valuable insights contained within the data are overlooked at the expense of the production of predefined reports for those with limited agendas.

Blocks of data, like diamonds, must be carefully manipulated to reveal their many facets. The same set of data viewed from varying angles can often reveal insights that might have otherwise gone unnoticed and may prove invaluable to one departmental chair or grant writer.

Multiple Uses of Data

While academic assessment data are captured and used primarily for the enhancement of student learning and the improvement of the instructional process, the same data may have numerous other uses. These uses may include insights into more effective placement of students into classes, the writing of various grants, program evaluation studies, and better class scheduling just to mention a few.

Borrowing a concept from the old data processing courses, data do not become information until they have been organized and processed into information. One knows when this has been achieved when useful decisions can be made based on the data gathered. Indeed, a truly effective student academic assessment program can be identified by its ability to empower numerous faculty, staff, and administrators to make decisions, intelligent predictions, and meaningful changes within the institution that ultimately benefit the student. Assessment systems that produce retrospective reports only are falling woefully short of the potential that is theirs.

Leveraging Local Resources

While all institutions of higher education have to have an ongoing system of academic assessment, some are in a better financial position to embellish this process than others. This will always be the case. Some institutions have elaborate computer systems and full-time assessment people at their disposal. The other colleges and universities, those not so fortunate, must be more creative in their efforts. One such creative strategy is that of leveraging existing resources in ways possibly overlooked previously.

Resources common to most colleges and universities regardless of their financial situation include such things as a number of PCs, sophisticated software such as the Microsoft Office 97 or 2000 edition, and several rather competent computer users within the faculty/staff ranks. Many faculty who are well versed in such things can be talked into a few brief training sessions for their colleagues. Also included as resources in most institutions is the ability of some administrators to rally these already present commodities in a synergistic fashion.

Some Basic Assumptions about People

The most important resource any institution has is its people. People are people and therefore one can count on certain traits surfacing as resource leveraging is undertaken. The first of these traits is pride. Faculty and staff tend to avoid situations that make them feel uncomfortable or inadequate. Any attempt to involve more people in data analysis and decision making must be done very carefully and in such a way so as not to pose a threat to one's pride.

Secondly there is acceptance. While many faculty and staff will not admit it, they would like to be included in current campus projects of high visibility. Down deep, most would like to think of themselves as movers and shakers.

Finally, there is the feeling of importance. People need to feel important in the workplace. One of the ways of achieving this is for the institution genuinely to value the input from those involved. One of the most significant forms of input that a person can make is a sound decision based upon hard data. Who are the decision-makers in most colleges? They include:

Faculty	as they study academic gains data
Division Chairs	as they develop program evaluation plans
Deans	as they make decisions in their respective areas
Librarians	as they consider various usage reports
Grant Writers	as they prepare and present demographic data
Assessment Personnel	as they produce internal reports as well as academic accreditation self-studies.

Getting Access to the Good Stuff

But what about the colleges that store all of their data on a central computer or mainframe? How do faculty using PCs in their offices access these data? More importantly, what do they do with the data if they do have access to it? The answer resides in the union of three very powerful tools:

1. Text-delimited data files
2. Microsoft Office Excel 97/2000 Spreadsheet
3. Pivot tables

Don't let your MIS people tell you that your PC can't handle large data files concerning student academic gains. Insist, in a pleasant manner, that they furnish you with several semesters of data in "tab-delimited" format. They can do this very easily.

Secondly, make sure that you have a copy of Microsoft Office 97 or 2000 on your PC. To be more specific, what you need is the Excel spreadsheet program or one comparable to it. If you are not very familiar with a spreadsheet program such as Excel, don't worry. A friend or someone from tech support can show you how to import data into the spreadsheet in five minutes or less.

The real hero in all of this is what is known as a "pivot table." This is a standard feature in Excel 97/2000. Pivot tables are without a doubt the most powerful tools in data analysis for the novice.

Arriving at Your Own Decisions

Many important decisions made in colleges, universities, corporations, etc., are based on the interpretation of one or more sets of data. Some people are number-oriented and many are not. Unfortunately those who feel uncomfortable working with numbers will often defer to the judgment of those more number wise. Disadvantages in doing so include:

- their interpretation may be incorrect or incomplete
- their perspective of the data may not serve your purposes
- As a decision-maker you need to feel comfortable with numbers.

Don't get caught in the position of having to defend or explain someone else's interpretation of a data set. Not only is this an uncomfortable predicament; it could also prove to be disadvantageous to your cause or position within an organization.

The methods suggested in this paper require very little time, resources, and knowledge. If you feel a little shaky about this, get a colleague to strike out with you in these efforts. The best scenario is to convince your Dean or department chair to set up a short training session, two to four hours tops. The payback can be tremendous!

Summing It Up

Your institution is collecting data. Find out who's collecting it and where it is being stored. Ask for a copy of the assessment data that pertains to your area, program, or special interest such as a grant proposal. Request that these data be given to you in either text form, tab-delimited form, or better yet in Excel format. Your MIS people may grumble and try to tell you that they can't do it but this isn't true. Let them know that you know better!

Locate a PC with Office 97 or 2000 on it and use the Excel spreadsheet package contained within it. If you can't find someone on campus to show you how to you the "pivot table" feature you can find numerous articles in bookstores and on the Internet pertaining to this topic. If you like you can visit the web site of Coffeyville Community College—ccc.cc.ks.us/academic/tlac.htm—where you will find a document titled "Enhancing Faculty & Staff's Ability to Make Quantitative Decisions." Feel free to download and duplicate this document. Also, don't hesitate to email me at donl@raven.ccc.cc.ks.us and I would be most happy to steer you to some other great resources in this area. Impress you colleagues and superiors. Show them what you can do. Give it a try!

Reference

López, Cecilia L. 1999. A decade of assessing student learning: What we have learned; What's next? Paper delivered in April at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in Chicago.

Don Lind is Coordinator of Academic Assessment at Coffeyville Community College in Coffeyville, Kansas.

Assessment and Program Review: Linking Two Processes

Dwight Smith
Douglas Eder

Assessment and program review are two activities conducted in higher education to improve educational quality. Assessment, begun in the 1980s, is used in a variety of ways to improve teaching and student learning and can be employed in the classroom or at the unit level.

Program review as described in this paper has functioned on a statewide basis in Illinois since the mid-1970s as a result of a state statute establishing the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). Assessment and program review function at different time intervals, but ask similar questions regarding teaching and student learning (e.g., What are the characteristics of a powerful learning environment?). When assessment and program review are linked, the academic unit functions like the learning organization described by Senge (1990). As discussed in this paper, linking these two processes provides insight into the improvement of educational quality.

Assessment through a Senior Assignment as Authentic Assessment

We define a Senior Assignment (SRA) as a scholarly engagement between a senior student and dedicated professor(s),—embedded in the ways-of-knowing of the discipline—that results in a product. The product can be an artistic performance, public speech, technical design, written thesis, gallery presentation, or a combination of these with other forms of expression. Ideal SRAs have several major properties, only three of which are outlined here. First, the SRA is a natural, visible product of the student's learning. That product makes student performance and the curriculum behind it assessable, usually by employing Primary Trait Analysis (Walvoord & Johnson, 1998) to compare actual student achievement with preset goals and standards for baccalaureate graduates. Second, really good SRAs reflect the context of the discipline that produced them; that is, they reveal not just the student's *control of* the discipline but also the student's *judgment about* the discipline. Through the SRA, a student is asked to demonstrate qualities similar to those exhibited by faculty in the discipline. SRAs put students in situations required of practitioners of the discipline, thus assessing them *authentically* (Wiggins, 1993). Third, by asking students to investigate and demonstrate the natural but messy business about how a conclusion actually comes into being in their disciplines, SRAs require students to become participants in their education. In the same way that an airplane cockpit flight simulator both teaches and assesses in *authentic*, supervised situations, so does the SRA both engage and assess the student authentically. To use Steve Ehrmann's term, the SRA functions as an *academic simulator* (Ehrmann, 1998).

Program Review

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) follows an eight-year program review cycle established by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Throughout the cycle, like programs (i.e., sciences, engineering, business, education, etc.) at the 12 state universities are reviewed simultaneously. In other words, for a given year all engineering programs at public universities are reviewed. For the review, all are asked to address questions regarding several criteria. The criteria and questions appear in Table 1.

SIUE uses various data to answer these questions with the data analyzed by faculty, program chairs, deans, and the provost. Faculty governance and relevant constituencies are thoroughly involved. The full program review process, with academic and administrative components, takes approximately two years. Data for each criterion are indicated in Table 2.

Table 1 – Program Review Criteria and Questions

Program Review Criteria	Questions
Student Demand	Do the credit hours, enrollments, or degree production of this program differ significantly from statewide or institutional averages?
Occupational Demand	What are the occupational objectives of students enrolled in the program? Do state employment projections in occupations related to the program show adequate job openings for graduates? Is there a need for the program based on occupational demand?
Centrality to Instructional Mission	Is the program central to the instructional mission of the university? To what extent does the program provide instructional support to students and faculty in other programs?
Breadth	Is there sufficient student interest and demand for all courses, specializations, options, and minors offered as part of the program? Are faculty and resources deployed productively?
Success of Graduates	Do graduates of the program report appropriate rates of job placement and/or progress in further education? Do current students and alumni report satisfaction with the program?
Costs	Has there been a significant increase or decrease in the unit costs of the program? Do the costs of the program deviate significantly from statewide average costs in the discipline? Can any deviation be corrected within existing resources?
Quality	Is the program achieving its objectives? Are faculty qualified and productive? Is the curriculum consistent with program objectives and up-to-date? Are academic support resources (including library, laboratory, and equipment/materials) adequate and up-to-date? Are high standards for student performance maintained? Do students achieve their academic and career objectives?
Productivity	What steps have been taken to improve the quality and productivity of this program? What investment and/or cost savings (annual and five-year projection) resulted from the review of this program?

Source: *Planning and Program Submissions*, pages IV-6-7 (IBHE RAMP Manual, 1993)

Table 2 – Data for Each Criterion

Program Review Criteria	Data
Student Demand and Costs	Annual enrollment and degrees granted Program costs in comparison to statewide mean
Occupational Demand	Department of Labor projections (state and federal); Professional Organization projections
Centrality and Breadth	Service loads by discipline; general education courses offered and enrollment
Success of Graduates	One-, five-, and ten-year out baccalaureate surveys; faculty anecdotes on student placement; certification and licensing pass rates
Quality	Faculty Program Review Committee Report; external reviewers; Program Director's Questionnaire; Senior Assignment; One-, five-, and ten-year out surveys; faculty teaching, research, and service awards; current student surveys and interviews; accreditation reviews; alumni advisory boards
Productivity	Student time-to-degree; faculty research and service productivity; curriculum revision; student recruitment, degrees granted
Statewide Analysis by IBHE	Dependent upon issues

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Of note in the data is the use of the Senior Assignment as a quality indicator. The importance of this type of assessment in program review has become prominent as the Illinois Board of Higher Education redefines the program review process. This change, begun during the 1998-99 academic year, asks the following questions:

1. What has the program done since the last review?
2. What opportunities for program improvement have been identified?
3. How have assessment results been used?
4. What has been learned from the review?

As Question 3 suggests, assessment is now an important element to the program review process and informs the answers to Question 4.

The use of the Senior Assignment in program review has led to faculty insights into SIUE program strengths and areas for improvement. Some of the strengths identified across the University include disciplinary knowledge, student analysis and problem solving, sensitivity to diversity, and critical thinking within the discipline. Areas identified overall for improvement included written and oral communication, research methodology, and quantitative analysis. Findings acquired in this way rise above the level of anecdote and, given their alignment with faculty priorities, usually result in action (e.g., replacing an old required course with a new one or adding new emphasis to an existing course). Specific SIUE assessment findings, program by program, can be found at http://www.siue.edu/~deder/assess/index.html.

Implications for Linking Assessment and Program Review

One lesson learned from linking assessment to program review is that professors who annually examine assessment results and take action based upon them continually improve student learning. Assessment is generally a formative process over which the faculty has considerable control. As Sheila Tobias (1992) observed, programs that share a sense of unity about themselves and engage in regular, serious, shared assessments of student learning tend to be more successful and effective. This becomes evident in program review, which tends to be a summative process. Such a program and its faculty begin to see program review not as a time for summative judgment, but as an opportunity to consider more publicly their efforts to improve student learning. Faculty in such a program, by assembling and presenting a case for serious peer review, foster Boyer's (1990) Scholarship of Teaching. The frequency of a program review, once every eight years in Illinois, allows time for improvements to be identified, made, tested, and reassessed. Changes in curriculum and teaching take time to implement in order to have a measurable effect on students. Linking the two processes is helpful to the faculty, to students, and to administrators as they consider ways to improve educational quality.

References

Boyer, E. L. 1990. *Scholarship reconsidered.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ehrmann, S. C. 1998. *Information to action: Asking good questions, generating useful answers, and communicating well.* Cincinnati: AAHE Assessment Conference.

Senge, P. M. 1990. *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* New York: Doubleday Currency.

Tobias, S. 1992. *Revitalizing undergraduate science: Why some things work and most don't.* Tucson: Research Corporation.

Wiggins, G. 1993. Assessment: Authenticity, context, and validity. *Phi Delta Kappan* (Nov.): 200-14.
Walvoord, B. E., and V. J. Andereson. 1998. *Effective grading.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dwight Smith is Assistant Provost for Planning and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

Douglas Eder is Director, Undergraduate Assessment and Program Review, at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

Revitalizing Institutional Assessments with Alternative Program Evaluation Designs

William E. Roweton

> ...I have come to realize that assessment data...analyzed primarily for descriptive purposes are of very little use because they are easily subject to misinterpretation and because they may serve to discourage institutions from further attempts at systematic assessment.... Causal analyses, on the other hand, are less likely to generate such reactions because they ordinarily deal more directly with the "why" and "how" of educational outcomes.... [C]ausal analyses have much more direct implications for the formulation of educational policy and the improvement of educational practice than do descriptive analyses. (Astin, 1993, p. 103)

Customarily, to begin academic program evaluation, departmental planning committees create assessment strategies including methodological designs for program evaluation. Too often in spite of early and very well meaning efforts, initial program evaluation designs reflect minimal technical knowledge and no experience. Unfortunately, at least by appearances, early assessment plans perform and, unless challenged, remain remarkably resilient to their own development. Even rudimentary plans "perform" as data-banks teem, and assessment rituals resurface annually with seasonal regularity. Year after year, too many academic assessment plans sustain themselves in spite of their performance.

In contrast, more productive postsecondary program assessment plans benefit from experience. Reminiscent of Darwin, healthy assessment plans adapt and accommodate over their institutional lives. However, more than survive, productive plans grow and prosper.

Operationally, productive program assessments confront, resolve, and, eventually, discount initial empirical questions. Newer and more pressing assessment targets replace earlier ones. When an assessment plan's performance disappoints, reconsider its data-generating design—the motor driving any assessment strategy. If the assessment machinery performs poorly, kick the tires and lift the hood. More than standard motor maintenance, this is evolution.

Isn't it amazing how few academic programs monitor the performance of their initial assessment plans? Is your institution's assessment plan productive? Are design decisions supporting your plan re-evaluated periodically?

Searching periodic reviews of an institution's assessment plan, especially its data-generating design, yield benefits. First, systematic evaluations capture and then may incorporate what has been gleaned experientially. Second, historical lessons incorporated intelligently rekindle any institution's interest in its assessment plan.

Session Plan

The Annual Meeting session, first, will review primary qualitative and quantitative research traditions and emphasize how designs resolve assessment "questions" empirically and logically. Second, selected assessment plans will be used to illustrate major evaluation designs. Third and throughout, audience volunteers will be encouraged to share experiences and illustrations. In summary, the session will encourage the re-evaluation of academic assessment plans by describing alternative designs, by illustrating realistic applications, and by encouraging audience participation.

Selecting Effective Assessment Plan Designs

Effective program evaluation designs (e.g., Smith & Glass, 1987) link testable and valued assessment questions with data-generating methodology. Skillfully-engineered and well-executed designs detail countless decisions about participant selection and treatment assignment; dependent and independent variables; methods of data collection; statistical analyses; and even underlying theoretical assumptions. Psychometrically, these decisions affect the types of data generated; levels of reliability and validity; and the meaningfulness of the results. Procedurally, designs determine "what happens to whom when and how." Regardless, all effective designs, like so many puzzle-pieces, assemble a meaningful assessment picture conceptually and empirically. Effective designs not only work; they make compelling sense.

Fortunately, contemporary program evaluation designs offer numerous qualitative (e.g., Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1995) and quantitative (e.g., Bordens & Abbott, 1999; Campbell & Stanley, 1966) choices. Openly re-evaluating these procedural alternatives focuses an institution's attention onto the heart of its program assessment plan.

Conclusion

The session will argue [1] for the deliberate and sustained management of institutional instructional assessment plans through [2] the periodic consideration of a program evaluation's design. Productive program evaluations should evolve. Increasingly effective and valuable program evaluations develop, it is argued, when sufficiently complex assessment designs as well as post-1965 statistics (Wilcox, 1998) apply. Productive growth requires attention and knowledge, in short, planning.

Of course, academic program assessments function well when they facilitate data-informed decisions to improve instruction. To do so, data from our program assessments should mirror shared and valid visions of postsecondary instruction. However, effective program evaluations are more than face valid; they should also be psychometrically and statistically defensible as well (e.g., Braskamp, 1991; Stake, 1967).

References

Astin, A. W. 1993 [1991]. *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education.* Phoenix: American Council on Education and the Oryx Press. Original work published in 1991.

Braskamp, L. A. 1991. Purposes, issues, and principles of assessment. *NCA Quarterly* 66:417-429.

Bordens, K. S., and B. B. Abbott. 1999. *Research design and methods: A process approach.* 4h ed. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing.

Campbell, Dr. T., and J. C. Stanley. 1966. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Reprinted from *Handbook of research on teaching,* ed. N. L. Gage. 1963. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Creswell, J. W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Marshall, C., and G. B. Rossman. 1995. *Designing qualitative research.* 2d ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Smith, M. L., and G. V. Glass. 1987. *Research and evaluation in education and the social sciences.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Stake, R. E. 1967. The countenance of educational evaluation. *Teachers College Record* 68:523-540.

Wilcox, R. R. 1998. How many discoveries have been lost by ignoring modem statistical methods? *American Psychologist* 53:300-314.

William E. Roweton is Professor and Chair of Education and Psychology at Chadron State College in Nebraska.

QUEST FOR QUALITY
MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 6

Quest for Quality in Student Learning: General Education

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Interdisciplinary General Education: Refining General Education Criteria

Cheryl Rose Jacobsen
Joan B. Fiscella

Rationale

In the last decade, the literature produced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Astin, Boyer, Gaff, and others has contained repeated criticisms and calls for reform of general education, most typically distribution requirements. Regional accreditation bodies, such as the North Central Association, similarly emphasize the centrality of general education in baccalaureate programs by urging careful consideration of general education's integrity and outcomes in the accreditation process. When concerns are raised by those involved in higher education, the most consistently cited failure in general education is the lack of coherence. The more nuanced definitions of coherence emphasize the importance of connection and the integration of knowledge, skills, and values.

This understanding of coherence is fundamental to interdisciplinary general education studies. According to theorists Klein and Newell, among others, interdisciplinary approaches in general education are the appropriate curricular response to the explosion of knowledge and the blurring of traditional discipline boundaries. Interdisciplinary approaches in general education also hold great promise for developing intellectual skills necessary to increasingly complex modes of analysis and problem solving, precisely because they can achieve a more holistic perspective through the emphasis on connection and integration. Finally, integrative work is, in Schneider and Shoenberg's words, in keeping with "the entire ethos of the contemporary world [which] calls for the capacity to cross boundaries, explore connections, move in uncharted directions."

Practice

Interdisciplinary general education programs appear in many different kinds of institutions, including community colleges, large public universities, and small liberal arts colleges. Within these institutions, the programs take several forms and occur at several places in the curriculum. They frequently appear as "core courses," "integrated studies," or "interdisciplinary studies." They also may be sequenced with introductory, mid-career, and concluding activities in general education. Whether as "cornerstone" or first-year seminar, as part of a four year core, or as capstones or senior seminar, interdisciplinary general education approaches share several common features. They frequently are organized around themes or issues, cluster disciplines in knowledge-domain offerings (such as humanities, social sciences, natural or life sciences), and are team-designed and/or team-taught with faculty from several disciplines participating. Most importantly, interdisciplinary general education approaches explicitly seek to move students to the active learning and critical thinking characteristic of integrative practice and the synthesis of learning both across disciplines and at the end of a sequence of courses.

Issues

In spite of the growth in interdisciplinary studies throughout the curriculum, most faculty and administrators are relatively unaware of the professional literature on interdisciplinarity that can inform the development of general education curricula, appropriate student outcomes and pedagogies, and assessment strategies. The fact that best practices in interdisciplinary general education overlap with more discipline-based or skill-based general education approaches only compounds or further obscures the distinctiveness of interdisciplinary approaches. Nonetheless there are issues central to interdisciplinary general education. These include the underlying assumptions about knowledge or content, the relationship of disciplines to interdisciplinarity, the teaching and learning strategies that result in integration and synthesis–key elements in interdisciplinary study–and the implications for faculty development and administrative support.

Definitional Starting Points for Interdisciplinary General Education

The literature on interdisciplinary education reveals some inconsistent terminology and lack of clarity about the nature of the integrative process. For example, theorists may distinguish among multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary; or they may talk about boundary-work and hybridization as forms of integration. While this is an evolving body of literature, something of a consensus is emerging on the key features of interdisciplinary work. Interdisciplinarity is most clearly understood in a particular context; that is, in "the process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession....[Interdisciplinary study] draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective." The key point is the integration or synthesis resulting in a more comprehensive view.

Parallel to the North Central Association's emphasis on the centrality of general education, accreditation standards for interdisciplinary general education also should address questions related to knowledge objectives, curriculum, teaching and learning, faculty development, and administrative support. These potentially include:

- Does the program have explicit educational goals that are distinctive in their emphasis on bringing together multiple perspectives and modes of inquiry?
- Does the curriculum achieve coherence by emphasizing the importance of connecting and integrating knowledge, skills, and values?
- Do the students actively engage in connection-making strategies?
- Do the assessment activities make use of multiple measures that are appropriate to integrative, higher order learning?
- Does the institution have opportunities for faculty development in secondary or parallel interests, for collaboration with colleagues outside of one's own department or discipline, and for team-teaching?
- Is the institution organized to allow students and faculty to move among and within programs and departments? Does it actively recruit and reward faculty for interdisciplinary work?

Conclusion

Interdisciplinary general education exacts more of a commitment from an institution than does a general education program of distribution requirements. Interdisciplinary education requires a complex organizational structure, significant resources allocated to faculty development, and multiple measures for promotion and tenure processes. Consequently, it also requires new approaches by consultant-evaluators and accrediting associations. One potential source of new approaches and refined accreditation criteria is in the work of the Association for Integrative Studies (AIS). AIS, a professional association for educators in interdisciplinary education and scholarship, is participating in the project on general education accreditation led by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U).

References

Astin, A. W. 1993. *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boyer, E. L. 1987. *College: The undergraduate experience in America.* New York: Harper Collins.

Klein, J. T., and W. G. Doty, eds. 1994. *Interdisciplinary studies today.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 58. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gaff, Jerry G., J. L. Ratcliff, and Associates, eds. 1997. *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum: A comprehensive guide to purposes, structures, practices, and change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Newell, W. H., ed. 1998. *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the literature.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Schneider, C. G., and R. Shoenberg. 1999. *Contemporary understandings of liberal education. The academy in transition.* Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1999.

Cheryl Rose Jacobsen is Chair and Professor of History at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, and is presently a Fellow at the Associated Colleges of the Midwest in Chicago, Illinois.

Joan B. Fiscella is Bibliographer for Professional Studies and Associate Professor, Library, at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and president of the Association for Integrative Studies.

Assessing General Education Programs by Integrating Theory, Process, and Practice

Pamela Pinahs-Schultz

Since the renewed interest in general education during the late 1970s, the American Council on Education reported that between 80 and 90 percent of their member institutions have reviewed and/or revised their general education requirements (1996). In addition to taking the general education program more seriously, accrediting bodies are looking to assessment to provide evidence of effective educational programs.

One of the most challenging aspects of the assessment movement, then, is its application to the general education program. As academic communities, we are often unclear as to how we define general education, not to mention the role assessment plays in this process.

Carroll College, a small private institution, has also struggled with creating an entirely new general education curriculum as well as the companion assessment program to evaluate its effectiveness. We developed, implemented, and subsequently improved our program by using a three-step formula: theory, process, and practice. This paper will briefly outline the three steps and the salient outcomes that comprise the general education core and companion assessment program.

Theory

The first step in creating both the general education core curriculum and assessment program was an extensive review of the current literature providing a conceptual framework from which to proceed. On some campuses unfortunately, this step is often overlooked due to perceived time constraints, and committees create programs that reflect personal experiences rather than scholarly research. At Carroll, once the literature was reviewed by an interdisciplinary task force, we realized how important it was first to articulate the purposes of our general education core and then, subsequently develop specific student learning outcomes. The following represents some of the issues the task force determined important:

- devote greater attention to fundamental intellectual academic skills (i.e., writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning)
- increase the opportunity for interdisciplinary study
- address moral and ethical dimensions of study
- address the freshman and senior years, which are critical transitional times for success
- expand general education courses into at the upper level
- recognize the importance of the general education component and its contribution to the major
- provide greater administrative support and recognition for teaching in the core
- provide all disciplines with an opportunity to teach in the core
- create new approaches to assess learning outcomes and use of results to improve programs

We also considered four key questions proposed by Catherine A. Palomba and Trudy W. Banta in *Assessment Essentials* (1999):

1. What should college graduates know, be able to do, and value?
2. How do the graduates of our institution acquire this learning?
3. What is the contribution of the institution and its programs to student growth?
4. How can student learning be improved?

The task force identified twelve student learning outcomes and five fundamental intellectual skills we believed all liberally educated persons should possess. These fundamental learning outcomes were subdivided into seven areas that comprise the new liberal studies core. In addition we created freshman and senior year experiences. These outcomes were subsequently presented to the faculty for discussion and approval.

The assessment literature identified several essential components to consider when developing the companion piece for the evaluation and subsequent improvement of the general education core. By focusing on what matters (student learning outcomes), we easily identified a data collection approach. We used a collaborative process involving faculty, students, and staff for the purpose of identifying the indicators, measurement, oversight, and action/change patterns utilized in our programs.

This first step, theory, provided us with a comprehensive and cohesive foundation from which to begin the process of creating our program. This step was pivotal for the subsequent development, evaluation, and improvement of our general education and assessment programs. While this step does require additional time up front in the process, it certainly results in greater efficiency during the process phase.

Process

After a clear foundation was articulated by the interdisciplinary task force, we created two standing committees, the general education committee and the assessment committee, to create the process for the actual development of our program. The general education and assessment committees are interdisciplinary in nature, share members, and are responsible for the oversight of the general education program. These committees are responsible for the approval, implementation, assessment, evaluation, and review of the general education program. To assure thoughtful preparation, documentation regarding course adoption into the new general education core was distributed to all faculty members six months in advance of the submission deadline.

Course adoption then followed a two-part process. First, Liberal Studies courses were selected by the general education committee if they addressed the specified learning outcomes approved by the faculty, no matter what discipline they represented. The directors of the Freshman Year Program were responsible for the approval of those courses, which were then forwarded to the general education committee. The Senior Capstone Program was also reviewed by the general education committee and eventually forwarded to the academic steering committee for course adoption. The assessment committee then examined the selected courses to identify whether the syllabus clearly demonstrated how students were acquiring the knowledge, skills, and values that coincided with the identified learning outcomes.

While this approach evaluated learning at the course level, we were still struggling with the appropriate assessment approaches for collecting and using assessment information at the program level.. Should we focus on individual or groups of courses for data collection? Do we assess everyone or a representative sample? Should we use standardized instruments or create our own? How much will this cost? After much discussion, we concluded that no one approach would adequately serve our needs and created a comprehensive assessment program using multiple measures in order to provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback at the course and program levels.

Creating a Practice

The third step involves taking what has been learned during the theory and process phase and fully developing it into a comprehensive program. We chose a phased-in approach with the Freshman Year Program implemented a full year prior to the Liberal Studies Program. This allowed us the necessary time to review all courses and the appropriate assessment sequence.

Program assessment began with the examination of existing instruments to determine what aspects of the program were already in place. We decided to continue to administer the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Survey (CIRP) and the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). We further determined that a nationally-normed pre-test of general education knowledge and skills, which is repeated with graduating seniors, would provide us with one measure of formal assessment. Separate standardized instruments were then developed for the evaluation of the freshman writing and seminar programs. The various program level objectives were formally assessed using the IDEA course evaluation instrument. While these instruments provided us with the quantitative data, we also realized the importance of assessing high order goals, which necessitated the use of indirect measures (portfolios, journals, and focus groups). Portfolio guidelines were developed for the Freshman Year Program—a fall semester First Year Seminar and a companion course in the spring, the Writing Seminar—and reviewed by faculty members outside that program. Competency-based exams were developed for several of the learning outcomes, as well as questions to be utilized in the various focus groups. Multiple assessment measures were created at the department level to be utilized for the evaluation of the Senior Capstone Experience.

In order to conduct qualitative assessment of our program at an institution without an office of institutional research, we used a student advisory council (SAC). The SAC is an innovative vehicle for collecting information on student academic achievement in the general education program through the study of randomly-selected cohort groups from each entering class. The SAC cohorts are involved in the following:

- a nationally-normed pre-test of general education knowledge and skills that is repeated with graduating seniors;
- the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Survey (CIRP) and the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI);
- focus groups concerned with the First Year Program and the Liberal Studies Program;
- faculty evaluation of cohort portfolios from the First Year Seminar and the Writing Seminar;
- alumni surveys five and ten years after graduation.

This multidimensional approach has provided us with both quantitative and qualitative data in order to improve our programs. The final step in the practice phase then becomes the evaluation and reporting of data to be used in the improvement of programs.

Those individuals responsible for the various aspects of the general education programs (see attached Matrix) are responsible for the interpretation and reporting of assessment results. These reports, which are due on May 30 of each academic year, are then forwarded to the appropriate committee(s) and provost. A format for reporting this information created by the assessment committee in order to streamline the process has provided a consistent framework for institutional analysis.

All reports and syllabi are available for review electronically, and an overview is presented at the opening workshop along with hard copies.

While Carroll College has struggled with the development, implementation, and evaluation of a new general education curriculum, we believe this three-step process—theory, process, and practice—has resulted in a solid program that can be continually reviewed and improved.

Hopefully, by creating a comprehensive, multidimensional, and dynamic assessment program around our general education core, we will not find ourselves needing to reinvent the entire general education program in the future. The assessment feedback loop will allow us to strengthen and adapt our program continually to meet the changing needs of both the institution and its students.

Suggested Readings

Angelo, T. S., and K. P. Cross. 1993. *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers.* 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Association of American Colleges (AAC). 1985. *Integrity in the college curriculum: A report to the academic community.* Washington, D.C.: AAC.

Association of American Colleges (AAC). 1994. *Strong foundations: Twelve principles for effective general education programs.* Washington, D.C.: AAC.

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). 1995. *Liberal learning and the arts of connection for the new academy.* Washington, D.C.: AACU.

Astin, A. 1991. *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education.* New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan.

Astin, A. 1993. *What matters in college?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T. W., J. P. Lund, K. E. Black, and F. W. Oblander, eds. 1996. *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bers, T., D. Davis., and W. Taylor. 1996. Syllabus analysis: What are we teaching and telling our students? *Assessment Update* 8(6):1-2, 14-15.

Bloom, A. 1987. *The closing of the American mind.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Boyer, E. L. 1987. *College: The undergraduate experience in America.* New York: Harper Collins.

Cheney, L. V. 1989. *Fifty hours.* Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities.

Chickering, A., and Z. Gamson. 1991. *Applying the seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 47. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Curry, L., and J. F. Wergin. 1997. Professional education. In *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum: A comprehensive guide to purposes, structures, practices, and change.* J. G. Gaff, J. L. Ratcliff, and Associates. A publication of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

El-Khawas, E., and L. Knopp. *Campus trends, 1996.* 1996. Higher Education Panel Report no. 86. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.

Farmer, J. 1997. Using technology. In *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum.* J. G. Gaff, J. L. Ratcliff, and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gaff, Jerry G. 1990. Avoiding the potholes: Strategies for reforming general education. *Educational Record* 60:50-59.

——. 1991. *New life for the college curriculum.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

——. 1999. *General education: The changing agenda.* Washington, D.C.:AACU

Gardner, P. D. 1998. Are college seniors prepared to work? In *The senior year experience: Facilitating integration, reflection, closure, and transition.* J. N. Gardner, G. Van Der Veer, and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gardner, John N., Gretchen Van der Veer, and Associates. 1998. *The senior year experience: Facilitating integration, reflection, closure,and transition.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lopez, C. 1998. How campuses are assessing general education. *Liberal education* 84 (3):36-43.

Matthews, R. S., B. L. Smith, J. MacGregor, and F. Gabelnick. 1997. Creating learning communities. In *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum: A comprehensive guide to purposes, structures, practices, and change.* J. G. Gaff, J. L. Ratcliff, and Associates. A publication of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA/CIHE). 1997. *Handbook of accreditation.* 2nd ed. Chicago: NCA/CIHE.

Palomba, C. A., and T. W. Banta. 1999. *Assessment Essentials.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Project on Strong Foundations for General Education. 1994. *Strong foundations: Twelve principles for effective general education programs.* Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges.

Task Group on General Education. 1988. *A new vitality in general education: Planning, teaching, and supporting effective liberal learning.* Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges.

Pamela Pinhas-Schultz is Chair, Department of Physical Education, at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Assessing General Education Programs by Integrating Theory, Process, and Practice

Appendix

Indicators General Education Variables	Measurement	Institutional Oversight / Responsibility	Use of Data	Action / Change
Liberal Studies Outcomes • Understanding the scientific way of knowing • Understanding the natural world • Understanding human behavior • Encountering the cultures of the world, past and present • Understanding the aesthetic mode of knowing • Critical encounters with great ideas of western culture • Perspectives we live by, decisions we make	• IDEA Form (faculty-developed questions) • ETS exam (SAC) • Focus Group (SAC) • CIRP Inventory • SOS Inventory • Syllabi Review	• General Education Committee • Assessment Committee • Provost • 3-Year course review	• Annual report submitted to Provost • Electronically posted • General Education Committee recommends	• Course improvement • Removal of courses from LSP • Examination of Area I and II courses • Course additions
Fundamental Skills • Academic writing • Oral communication • Use of information technology • Critical thinking • Understanding contemporary relevance	• IDEA Form (locally developed questions) • ETS Exam (SAC) • Focus Group (SAC) • Math competency exam • Computer Science competency exam • Syllabi review	• General Education Committee • Assessment Committee • Provost • 3-Year course review	• Annual report submitted to Provost • Electronically posted • General Education Committee recommends	• Reworking of information technology (IT) piece • Faculty workshops
Freshman Year Program • Writing • Library research • Information technology • Group work • Overall Communication	• IDEA form (locally developed) • ETS Exam (SAC) • Focus Groups (SAC) • Writing portfolio (SAC) • Syllabi review	• General Education Committee • Assessment Committee • Provost • Freshman Year Director • Annual review	• Annual Report Submitted to Provost • Electronically Posted • General Education and First Year Directors recommend changes	• Instructor training • Modification of IT piece • Addition of library research course
Senior Capstone • Integration of knowledge • Professional writing • Ethical considerations	• Portfolio • Survey questionnaire • Program review • Syllabi review interviews	• General Education Committee • Assessment Committee • Provost • Academic Steering Committee • Department Chair	• Annual report submitted to Provost • General Education Committee and Academic Steering Committee	• New course addition • Mandatory graduation requirements

General Education Assessment: Keeping the Process Practical, Manageable, and Beneficial

Seth Mendelowitz

Overview

One of the challenges of facilitating the General Education Academic Assessment process is that there is so much territory to be covered and accounted for, as well as an overwhelming array of approaches that might be taken. Faced with the continual proliferation of ideas for assessing, as well as the initial grasping for a tangible sense of what one should be trying to accomplish, it is easy for Academic Assessment facilitators and committees to spend more time conceptualizing and re-conceptualizing, defining and re-defining their tasks than they spend on the assessments themselves. In addition is the problem of tracking and presenting our accruing mass of processes and assessments in a clear, accessible framework.

Many (if not most) of us enter into this process apprehensively, even cynically. This is understandable–as Ambrose Bierce defined it, a cynic is "a blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be." The task *is* potentially overwhelming; additionally, we probably all contend with faculty across our campuses who range, in their attitudes toward assessments, from passive resistors to frenzied conspiracy theorists certain that Big Brother is invading their classrooms. At Parkland College, we have found that through a balance, or continual interplay, between flexibility and focus, together with gentle prodding, our General Education Academic Assessment process is evolving into something that is tangible, productive, and even widely valued through our campus.

David Barry suggests, "If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved–and will never achieve–its full potential, that word would be 'meetings'." Our General Education assessment committee (of seven members, representing various relevant departments) began with the understanding that whenever we meet, we would each have made substantial, tangible progress in our tasks. Through our patient and flexible willingness to capitalize upon fortuitous accidents in the process, a steadily forward-moving task orientation, a healthy measure of cynicism, and an emerging vivid framework in which to capture and present our assessments, we have minimized faculty resistance and our own apprehensions about the project.

The General Education Objectives/Core Courses Matrix

Our General Education statement has eight bulleted objectives (though the assessment team has decided to split the first into three, giving us ten objectives to measure). Our initial charge, in order to keep the process manageable, was to focus on assessing three objectives this year, three next year, and so on.

We developed a matrix, or grid, with ten vertical columns (for the ten objectives to be measured) and one hundred twenty horizontal rows (for the General Education core courses). Each of us on the committee made a tentative determination of which courses help meet which objectives. We anticipate that the assessment process and its ongoing analyses and actions will encourage greater interdisciplinary emphasis in the General Education core courses. In order to retain core course status–a desirable designation, since it increases the given course's enrollments–a core course should be contributing to a variety of the General Education objectives. However, we see such encouragement as something that should emerge gradually out of our process. In order to avoid faculty resentment, we are *initially* assessing courses according to the objectives that faculty see the courses as fulfilling.

Each box on our matrix that is checked (meaning the course listed to the left meets the objective listed above) will then, over the course of the assessment process, accrue other notations as other steps in the process are completed: Course Information Forms reviewed and revised to reflect the relevant General Education Objectives; syllabi similarly reviewed and revised; initial assessments performed; initial analysis and action completed; improved assessments performed; and so on.

Our Primary Question about the Process

Our initial preconception was that the General Education assessment committee should be designing studies that cut vertically down our matrix. In other words, in the original conception, our charge was to design one tool and process by which to assess writing skills across all General Education core courses; one tool and process by which to assess reading and listening skills across all core courses; one tool to assess critical thinking across all core courses; and so on. This has certainly been feasible for writing skills. Two years successively (refining the process after the first "go-round") we collected essays from across General Education core courses and assessed them according to Primary Traits, and then correlated the results with students' credit hours taken in order to determine whether students' writing skills (and *which* types of skills) do in fact improve as they accumulate credit hours at Parkland, in particular in our General Education core courses. However, we were not sure how we would design, for instance, a critical thinking measure that would cut across disciplines. We had been shown examples of techniques used elsewhere, but we felt that these assessment ideas (attempts at determining generic definitions and measures for critical thinking that cut across disciplines) would force, contort, and butcher the meaning of critical thinking within our classes, until the process becomes a vague and unprofitable form of hoop-jumping. So, our primary concern has revolved around the distinction between doing assessments that cut vertically down our matrix (in other words, targeting a General Education objective and then assessing it in all the core courses that claim to contribute toward that objective) versus assessments that go horizontally across the matrix (having objectives measured separately within each program).

Our NCA consultant (from National Center for Higher Education Management Systems) has confirmed for us that the assessments should, first and foremost, be designed according to what will best measure and improve our General Education program. He agrees that for most of our objectives, we will not derive meaningful data if—at least in our first round of assessments—we "force" the process. Once we have separate data (from the General Education core courses in different areas—Math, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, etc...) for, say, students' progress in computational and quantitative skills, we can then do some overall analysis of the various

GENERAL EDUCATION

Educated persons tend to be inquisitive about all aspects of life; they seek, evaluate, and use information to make informed, reasonable decisions in a complex world of personal, professional, and environmental challenges. Parkland College is committed to equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values essential for educated persons to realize their potential as learners, workers, and valuable participants in a global society.

The General Education core curriculum requirements in communications, social and behavioral sciences, humanities and fine arts, mathematics, and physical and life sciences are central to the mission of Parkland College. The requirements are designed to provide an enlightening, interrelated program that ensures a wide range of diversified knowledge and promotes lifelong intellectual inquiry. Students enter Parkland with different levels of general knowledge; all of Parkland's academic offerings will help them grow by improving their individual skills and competencies and by providing experiences in areas they have not yet explored.

The Parkland College faculty has developed the following General Education objectives. Students will:

- demonstrate their ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively;
- demonstrate their ability to think critically, which includes collecting facts and making decisions based on them, and solving problems, using methods of critical and scientific inquiry;
- demonstrate their ability to compute and to think and express themselves effectively in quantitative terms;
- demonstrate their creative potential and their ability to appraise the quality, value, and significance of cultural artifacts, such as literature, sculpture, painting, music, and performing arts;
- demonstrate their ability to use technology, especially computer technology, to access, retrieve, process, and communicate information;
- demonstrate their understanding of worldwide political, social, and economic issues, historical and geographical perspectives, the internal and external world, and philosophical ideas;
- demonstrate their understanding of the necessity of core values in helping them make ethical personal, social, and professional decisions;
- demonstrate their understanding of the benefits of diversity in cultures, ideas, perspectives, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation for a democratic society.

data, and determine whether some sort of generic study might be designed, one that might cut vertically across all the relevant core courses, for the assessment of computational and quantitative skills. We may decide that for this particular General Education objective, all the direct measures are best done within the separate programs, and we might use indirect measures to obtain some other sorts of holistic feedback (for instance, surveying students at various levels of General Education credit accumulation to see if they feel that their computational and quantitative abilities are being improved).

Fortuitous Accidents

By not clinging too firmly to any preconceptions about what will work best, we have minimized faculty resistance to the assessment process. When our campus's current wave of Academic Assessments began a few years ago, we assumed that each academic program across campus needed to assess its own success as a program. As our General Education assessment process has begun to unfold, we have come to realize that the vast majority of enrollments within many of our programs are not students majoring in those programs but, rather, students taking their General Education core courses. These programs, therefore, should be focused on assessing their contributions toward General Education. However, the fact that most of them have by now completed a round of assessments has provided two important and related benefits. First, because we did not impose upon the programs the objectives that they should be assessing, we are now able to see what the faculty teaching those core courses (but who, for the most part, haven't been thinking of the courses as specifically General Education courses) consider to be important goals of the courses—thus, we already have a reliable indicator of the extent to which many of our General Education core courses are or aren't contributing to General Education objectives. Secondly, we now have a first round of assessments (running horizontally across our matrix) already well underway and, in many areas, completed by the efforts of faculty within all the programs—and we obtained this without the faculty ever feeling like they were being overly constrained by a committee of people who (other than their own department representative on the committee) are not familiar with their courses.

We can now use lessons learned from the first rounds of assessments in order to design good second rounds that look, with more focus, at General Education objectives. Most faculty, whatever their attitudes may have initially been, did not find the first round of assessments to be without benefits, so rather than immediately exclaim that they have wasted their time, when they learn that really they did not need to come up with their own program assessments, they seem to be expressing relief that the General Education committee is now helping to cull the various data and shape the next round of assessments. If we, two or three years ago, had been brought together as a committee in order to design measures according to our original preconceptions (measuring three objectives one year, three more the next year, and so on), we would only have met with the understandable resentment of faculty. But because the process had evolved with considerably fewer constraints, faculty across campus, generally speaking, seem to be developing a more easy-going attitude toward the whole process.

"Cleaning House"

We are currently reviewing the Course Information Forms (on file in each department) and syllabi for the General Education core courses. We are finding that these various documents have not been written with the General Education objectives specifically in mind; right now, the learning outcomes indicated for most of the courses are lists of the course-specific knowledge to be gained and not the General Education knowledge, attitudes, and skills. But again, rather than risk alienating faculty by giving directives about how they should design their Course Information Forms and syllabi, we are offering suggestions for consideration as we attempt to "clean house" for the approaching North Central visit. We think that the faculty (particularly when they understand that retaining General Education core course status contributes to their course enrollments) will find our suggestions sensible and non-intrusive. For instance, the use of mathematical skills is implicit in many of the Physics classes, but haven't been made *explicit* in the Course Information Forms or syllabi. We are suggesting that instead of merely stating, as a learning outcome, "The student will gain a basic understanding of the physics of motion," the wording can be fine-tuned to include something like "and develop the algebraic and trigonometric skills relevant to the physics of motion."

This is an excellent opportunity to stimulate faculty discussions about what skills and knowledge students gain in their classes. Generally, faculty are proud to see their classes as contributing to many of the General Education objectives; we are ensuring them that we will not necessarily be expecting them to assess all of the objectives that they claim (some of the objectives, particularly attitudinal ones, will be assessed by the General Education committee, in assessments that cut vertically down our matrix). This is also an excellent opportunity to align the Course Information Forms, the catalog course descriptions, the syllabi, the General Education objectives, and what faculty actually do in their classrooms.

Organizing and Presenting Our Assessments

While our overall approach has been relatively laid back, allowing the various processes to evolve through the efforts of many faculty across campus, we need to be able to capture and present our data and analyses in clear, organized formats. We are setting up our records according to a vivid, identifiable pattern. Each General Education objective is a separate chapter in our growing looseleaf notebook (with a parallel web version). Each chapter will be set up according to the same pattern, each section within the chapters color-coded, so that each chapter will contain the same colors in the same sequence as every other chapter.

By having this clear framework, our entire process is falling into place in a way that is pragmatic, and is helping the process to seem far less daunting than it had initially seemed to be.

Seth Mendelowitz is Coordinator of Preparatory Writing and Chair, General Education Academic Assessments, at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois.

The Reality of Assessing General Education Competencies of Part-Time Community College Students

Carol Scarafiotti
Laura Helminski
Larry Celaya

As part of its student achievement plan, in 1998-99 Rio Salado College implemented a large scale assessment of its students' general education competencies. This paper presents the original assessment design, the implementation results, and lessons learned.

The team designing Rio Salado College's plan for assessment and improvement of student learning knew that a conventional approach to evaluating student achievement would not work at a non-campus college that specializes in customized, unique programs and partnerships; accelerated formats; and distance delivery, and is primarily comprised of part-time students and adjunct faculty. Furthermore, they realized that a different approach was needed at a college where the annual credit duplicated headcount is 36,345, where 47% of its students typically enroll in only one-four college credits each semester, and where 50% of the student body is new each semester.

Original Philosophical Assumptions

The team based its student achievement plan upon the following philosophical assumptions.

- Because Rio is a college of part-time students (most of whom are not seeking a degree from Rio), the assessment of student achievement must proportionately include the part-time, non-degree seeking student as well as the degree-seeking student.
- Assessment should not be perceived as a separate or intrusive requirement. It should be integrated within the instructional process, and both faculty and students should understand the importance of student assessment.
- The assessment process must be convenient for students and accommodate Rio's geographically dispersed student population. The assessment process should also incorporate the college's twenty-six enrollment periods for distance learning courses.

General Education Competency Assessment by Student Cohort

In order to be true to its assessment philosophy of including part-time, non-degree seeking students, the Rio Salado College team developed an "assessment by student cohort" approach. Within this approach, Rio's three student cohorts were assessed for competency in general-education skills and knowledge areas. Table 1 illustrates the competencies to be assessed for each cohort.

- **Cohort One.** Students who are seeking an Associate in Arts transfer degree from Rio. This is the smallest cohort, but these students take a large number of courses exclusively from Rio Salado College. Consequently, this cohort has the most extensive assessment.

- ◇ **Cohort Two.** Students who are taking courses through Rio's Distance Learning program. These students typically enroll in 3-6 credits each semester and are not seeking degrees from Rio.
- ◇ **Cohort Three.** Students who are enrolled in Rio's Dual Enrollment program. These students are high school students (most often honor students) who tend to complete 14-18 credit hours of General Education courses in the areas of math, science, foreign languages, English, and humanities.

Table 1 - Cohort Assessments

Competency	Degree Seeking	Distance	Concurrent
Writing	•	•	•
Reading	•	•	•
Critical Thinking	•	•	•
Problem Solving	•	•	•
Science Reasoning	•		
Speaking	•		
Listening	•		
Humanities	•		

Assessment Outcomes

In an attempt to use multiple measures of competency in general education, the team employed faculty-developed instruments (assessments and rubrics) and a national standardized exam—the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)—for data collection during 1998-99. Following the assumption that the assessment should not be intrusive or viewed as additional work by students, the faculty developed and embedded instruments and assessment exercises within courses. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the results from the faculty developed assessments and the CAAP.

Table 2 - Learning Outcomes by Cohort 1998-99

Fall & Spring Semester Mean Scores								
	Cohort 1 Distance Learning		Cohort 2 Dual Enrollment		Cohort 3 Degree Seeking		All Rio	
Competency Area	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Reading	3.03	3.06	3.17	•	2.92	•	3.08	3.06
Writing	3.03	2.74	3.09	3.03	2.72	•	3.03	2.76
Problem Solving	2.95	3.11	3.29	3.65	2.99	•	3.18	3.30
Critical Thinking	3.02	3.09	2.92	•	3.32	•	3.06	3.09
Humanities		3.09			0.00	3.00		3.08

• *Data not collected*

Table 3 - Rio Salado College Degree Seeking Students' Scores on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) Spring 1999

Skill Area	CAAP Mean Scores	
	Rio	National
Writing Skills	63.4	62.7
Math	56.3	56.1
Reading	62.5	61.1
Critical Thinking	62.2	61.2
Science Reasoning	57.7	59.0

Rio Salado College also conducted a statistical analysis of the scores achieved on faculty-developed assessments in the areas of writing, reading, critical thinking, and problem solving. These results were compared with the number of credit hours of General Education courses the students took from Rio and the students' grade point averages. The results of this analysis suggest that although Rio Salado students generally demonstrated college-level competence in the areas assessed, a positive correlation does not exist between the level of competence and the number of college credit hours accumulated. In addition, a positive correlation could not be established between the level of competence and grade point average.

Lessons Learned About Research Design and Assessing Part-Time Students

In retrospect, it may have been a mistake to use assessment exercises that relate directly to course content and embed these exercises within courses. For example, there may have been too much association between the competency assessment exercise and the actual course, making it difficult to determine if students with a more extensive general education would perform better on the assessments. Thus, in the 1999-2000 year, we will be implementing a revised approach, which includes non-course related program-level assessment exercises.

The team learned some additional lessons listed below, some of which will be used to improve the 1999-2000 assessment implementation.

1. When analyzing assessment data for part-time students, it is helpful to group students into cohorts.
2. Because part-time students have taken courses from many different institutions, it is difficult to accurately measure value added by one institution.
3. In general, there are more variables associated with part-time students than with full-time students and this must be considered in data analysis and in designing interventions.
4. It is more challenging to motivate part-time students than it is to motivate full-time students to participate in assessment activities.
5. Factors such as time and convenience are more important when assessing part-time students.
6. All things considered, operationalizing an assessment plan for part-time students is more complicated than for full-time students. Full-time students can be more easily identified and scheduled.

Conclusion

Conventional approaches to evaluating student achievement are not always appropriate for institutions that primarily provide learning opportunities for part-time learners.

Carol Scarafiotti is Dean of Instruction at Maricopa County Community College–Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona.

Laura Helminski is Faculty Chair, Communication, Reading, at Maricopa County Community College–Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona.

Larry Celaya is Faculty Chair, Public Administration and Government Programs, at Maricopa County Community College–Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona.

Assessment as a Method to Improve General Education

Karen B. Mann
Judith Dallinger

Introduction

Bringing assessment into a close and meaningful relationship with the overall general education curriculum of a college or university is difficult. Assessment programs that focus only on individual courses and faculty leave the larger structure of general education requirements unexamined, although the success of teaching and learning in particular instances is clearly enhanced. Assessment programs that attempt to "test" the success of the general education curriculum as a whole usually leave individual faculty unconvinced and hence unchanged, because of the data's lack of clear relevance to their own practices. Even careful planning with an awareness of this "Scylla and Charybdis" cannot guarantee success: assessment itself has multiple tasks, so carrying it out successfully in the first place often obscures its significance as a means to these other, perhaps larger ends. Western Illinois University has moved through assessment itself to those larger curricular ends; our experiences reveal what particular stages and methods of assessment help to make it both relevant to teaching and learning in the individual classroom and valuable for curriculum review as a whole.

History

Assessment of student learning in general education at Western Illinois University began following the approval of WIU's Plan of Assessment by the North Central Association in 1992. The WIU General Education curriculum requires students to choose courses distributed among five categories: Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities, Multicultural-Crosscultural Studies, and Human Well Being. In addition, students complete two writing and one oral communication courses, which constitute a Communication Skills category. The Assessment Plan called for the creation of an assessment team for each of the six categories of courses, which would be composed of faculty members who regularly teach courses within the category. Categories II through VI are comprised of lists of courses from which students are guided to make individualized selections in order to meet distribution requirements. As a result, the general education at WIU does not include a core of particular content to which all students are exposed. Successful completion of each student's individual general education is expected to lead to his/her accomplishment of a set of goals for general education.

Since 1992, those stated goals were organized into three broad areas, only two of which corresponded to any of the actual categories of course requirements (Part II: "learning the methods of inquiry of the sciences/mathematics, social sciences, and humanities"; and the first goal of Part III: competency in communication). In other words, while each of the stated goals for student achievement within general education might be mapped into one or more of the general education categories of courses, there was not a one-to-one correspondence between the goals and the categories of courses. Because of the dual nature of general education at WIU–being structured into categories of course choices, but aimed at general goals to be achieved–WIU had the dual responsibility of assessing student learning within general education categories as well as assessing the accomplishment of the general education goals by means of those categories.

Initially, six "Pilot Assessment Committees" were created and charged with 1) articulating the specific objectives for student learning within each category (based upon the university's list of broad general education goals); and 2) developing a plan for assessing those objectives. Following a year of work by the Pilot Committees, "Assessment

Research Teams" or ARTs, composed in a similar fashion, were established for each of the distribution categories. ARTs were asked to expand or revise assessment plans developed by the respective Pilot Committees, to institute a system of data collection and analysis of indicators of student learning; and to develop preliminary recommendations for curricular or other changes that would lead to increased student learning in general education. The responsibility for assessing student learning within the communication skills category was assigned to faculty and administrators in the appropriate departments of English and Communication.

Assessment of general education learning objectives using the ART structure was continued for four years, and all teams developed and carried out strategies for continuous assessment data collection, analysis, and development of recommendations. Recently the faculty-composed team system of general education assessment was formalized with the development of standing "Curriculum and Assessment Teams" that report the results of assessment processes to appropriate committees within the system of faculty governance and to the administration.

Strategies

The faculty teams created for assessment approached their tasks differently. Each team selected a method of assessment that seemed to suit the focus or sense of collective responsibility of the faculty members who comprised the team. Briefly stated, their methods for determining the nature and level of student learning were as follows:

- ◇ **Sciences and Mathematics:** Students responded to a set of items included on course tests in selected disciplines. Items were designed to elicit information regarding the "structure of observed learning outcomes" (SOLO) distributed across a hierarchy of thinking skills: pre-structural, unistructural, multi-structural, relational, and abstract. Although the data that students were asked to manipulate derived from the content of each course (e.g., physics, chemistry, geography), the percent achieving each level of thinking could be generalized across courses.
- ◇ **Social Sciences:** Students responded to a 55-item multiple-choice methodology test, of which 15 were core items focused on social sciences methodology and ten items represented important concepts from four of the five social sciences disciplines (economics, psychology, political science, sociology). [The four departments in the Human Well Being category also used a multiple-choice test of key concepts from the courses included in that category.]
- ◇ **Humanities:** Faculty in humanities courses were asked to develop an instrument for individual humanities courses that assessed student learning of specific content using a methodology and goals developed for humanities courses generally. The individual faculty member articulated specific humanities course goals by analogy to the more general statement of goals for the humanities as these had been developed and approved by the humanities faculty as a whole. Student success was generalized from course to course by a standard scale of low, middle, and high performance on the instrument developed by the faculty member. [The departments in the Multi-Cultural/Cross-Cultural category used a similar method for the courses included in that category.]

As the process of assessment and the ongoing review of curriculum unfolded, the method selected by the humanists provided the most powerful means to examine and improve the general education curriculum. This was true because of two factors: the strong, ongoing involvement of humanities faculty and departments in decision-making; and the strategy of developing definitions of humanities learning that stood midway between general cognitive skills and specific disciplinary content.

The process initiated for carrying out humanities assessment models that strategy. Careful steps needed to be taken to ensure a common ground of learning and assessment among the individual humanities courses, because the humanists were permitted the widest kind of autonomy in deciding on the focus and method of assessment within each course. An assessment manual provided the following kind of information, in order to ensure generalizable assessment data:

1. working on humanities assessment as a department
2. placing your humanities course(s) within the general education goals and objectives
3. deciding what kind of instrument to use to assess student learning in your course

4. combining general objectives and a particular instrument to name the particular objectives for assessment at this time
5. developing a scale for measuring the students' attainment of your objectives for them
6. examining students' appreciation for humanities education generally
7. making a schedule for the assessment activities
8. examining the results of your assessment
9. writing the assessment report
10. making plans

Consequences

When the university's Faculty Senate, as well as its Council on General Education, confronted difficulties in matching current general education goals with specific assessment information—and with decision-making on what courses to add to the present general education structure—it became apparent that assessment teams could fruitfully assist in an examination and revision of general education goals, so that the goals would match the course requirements that students had to meet. The process by which the humanities assessment team had developed a two-tiered definition of learning goals for humanities courses was the most directly useful pattern for the other assessment teams to adopt. Using the structure of assessment teams generally and the participatory, two-tiered process evolved by the humanities team in particular, the faculty governance structure achieved a new set of general education goals, for a six-part curriculum defined primarily in cafeteria style, which was 1) written from the perspective of student learning, and 2) automatically more conducive to assessment of that learning.

Karen B. Mann is Professor of English at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois.

Judith Dallinger is Director of Assessment in the Department of Communication at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois.

Assessing the Achievement of General Education Objectives: A College-Wide Approach

Trudy Bers
B. Diane Davis
Mary L. Mittler

Introduction and Purpose

Assessing general education outcomes continues to be an important and complex task for the North Central Association Colleges and Schools. A range of assessment approaches exists, including standardized tests, portfolio assessments, and course-based assignments focused on general education objectives. However, no approach has gained universal acceptance, and colleges are still struggling with issues such as feasibility, reliability, validity, cost, student participation, and faculty buy-in as they plan and implement general education assessments.

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the process and results of a novel general education assessment at a public community college. The assessment transcended disciplines, involved a cross-section of full and part-time faculty from many departments, and illustrated the difficulty and the benefit of assessing general education competencies.

The Setting

Oakton Community College is a public community college located in the north shore suburbs of Chicago. The college's district is affluent, with nationally known public schools and a strong commitment to education. The combination of high socio-economic status of residents and expectations that high school graduates will go to college results in a college-going rate ranging from 80-95% among recent high school graduates, even those who do not meet traditional academic standards for college success.

The institution's student population includes a large percentage of foreign-born students whose native language is not English—upwards of 20%—and a large percentage of students who already hold a bachelor's degree or above—about 20-25%. Eighty percent of students are part-time; students' average age is 30, and 45% are above the age of 24. Each fall 30% of students are new to the institution, including reverse transfers who previously attended other colleges. In the spring the percentage of new students drops to about 12%.

Two-thirds of students are in baccalaureate-transfer programs, though this figure is somewhat misleading since many bachelor's degree students are categorized in transfer programs though they are taking courses primarily to learn job-related skills or for personal enrichment. As is the case at most community colleges, only a small percent of students complete an associate degree or certificate (about 5% of the total student population). Most students who transfer do so before earning a degree.

The Project

The Oakton Student Academic Achievement Team (SAAT) conducted a pilot project in spring/summer 1999 to assess general education learning outcomes. A sample of 604 students enrolled in spring 1999 were given and answered questions about prompts covering selected general education objectives. Trained faculty from a variety of disciplines used rubrics developed for each prompt to score students' work. Faculty who participated in scoring students' work had attended a workshop led by Virginia Anderson, Towson State University, a nationally known expert in primary trait scoring. They received additional training for the specific prompts from Oakton faculty members who led the development of the scoring rubrics and supervised scoring sessions. A total of 865 scores were obtained, because one prompt covered two different general education areas. Students' work was holistically scored with rubrics based on a three-level scoring system, with the top two levels indicating a student met standards for general education objectives on that prompt. Three prompts covered four general education areas. The prompts and areas covered were:

- An article associating coffee drinking with sexual activity among adults aged 60 or over. This prompt was assessed using two different rubrics. One scoring rubric, referred to as "social science," related to general education objectives about distinguishing theory from opinion, evaluating supporting evidence, and recognizing and evaluating hypotheses about human behavior. The other scoring rubric, referred to as "communications," related to general education objectives to use language correctly and efficiently and to write competently.
- A graph depicting the number of bachelor's degrees awarded between 1960 and 1995, by gender; this prompt was used to assess mathematics objectives. The prompt required interpretation of points and intersections of lines on a graph.
- A Dilbert cartoon and letter to the editor about the features of "good cartoons." This prompt was used to assess humanities objectives. The prompt required discussion of good reasons to support conclusions about a "work of art."

As potential predictors of students' scores, we identified a number of demographic and academic variables to use as independent variables or controls: age, gender, cumulative credit hours (CUMHRS), cumulative grade point average (CUMGPA), a proxy to depict students' proficiency in English composition (ENGLISH), and a proxy to depict students' proficiency in mathematics (MATH).[1]

A list of some 51 classes with high numbers of students who had earned 30 or more credits was prepared. Faculty members teaching those courses were asked to administer the general education assessment prompts to students present during the week of April 5-11, 1999.

Prompts were printed on different color paper for ease of handling. Each faculty member was given a packet with the three different prompts along with detailed instructions, including an explanatory statement to read to students. Students were asked to do their best work. Prompts were distributed randomly among students, with each participant completing just one prompt in a class. Students themselves were asked to select a different prompt if they had already completed a prompt in a different class.

A total of 604 students completed one or more prompts. A total of 865 prompts were scored (recall that one prompt was actually scored twice, and a handful of students may have completed more than one prompt).

Results

Researchers examined the extent to which students met standards on the assessments, and also the association between a number of student demographic and academic characteristics and students' achievement levels on the prompts. Results were:

- Overall, 59% of prompts were scored at a level to indicate students met general education achievement levels; 14% were scored high pass and 45% were scored low pass.
- About two-thirds of prompts in social sciences, mathematics, or humanities received passing scores, while only 44% in communication received passing scores.
- Only one-third of the prompt scored for both communications and social sciences received passing scores in both areas.
- Cumulative GPA was associated with scores on the communications prompts, the predictor variable indicating mathematics competency (MATH) was associated with scores on the mathematics prompt, and the predictor

variable indicating English competency (ENGLISH) was associated with scores on the mathematics and social sciences prompt, but not on the communications prompt.

- Age, gender, and cumulative credits were not associated with scores.

The project described above is a unique approach to assessing general education. In considering the findings, these issues should be kept in mind.

- Student data have limitations. Many students who have attended other colleges and universities do not transfer their credits to Oakton, especially those who have already earned a bachelor's degree. Consequently data about credits earned are incomplete because they do not include credits from other institutions.
- Students for whom there appear to be no data about English placements/courses or mathematics placements/courses may in fact have taken English or mathematics courses elsewhere.
- It is premature to judge whether the percentage of students achieving standards (high or low pass) on the general education objectives assessed in this project is a "good" or "poor" percent.
- Faculty members who selected prompts, developed scoring rubrics, and evaluated students' work on the prompts discovered it was much more difficult to identify appropriate prompts and to formulate clear questions to which students responded than they at first had thought it would be.
- To what level of expected competence should prompts and the questions to which students respond be geared? Should the College develop different prompts or instructions to accommodate ESL students?
- The instructions faculty read to students participating in the general education assessment included this final statement: "Please do your best work." Some have suggested that students should have been told explicitly that the quality of their writing counted.
- Students' work on this assessment project was not part of their regular coursework. We can only speculate on whether asking students to do work which did not matter for grades or graduation invited them not to take the work seriously.

The general education assessment project had immediate effects at the institution beyond just assessing students' meeting general education objectives. The College had adopted its current general education objectives only two years previously. A broad-based faculty committee recommended them, but had not considered assessability in most of their conversations. The process of selecting prompts and developing scoring rubrics made it apparent that many of the existing 34 general education objectives were redundant or were framed in such a way that it was virtually impossible to assess them. Moreover, by grouping them under discipline headings, there was a strong implication that specific departments had the main responsibilities for teaching those objectives and assessing them. It was difficult for some people to understand that general education was a college-wide rather than departmental or discipline-based imperative.

During the summer immediately following completion of the project—even before results were known—a faculty-administrator team attended a general education institute with the explicit purpose of taking a fresh look at the college's general education objectives in light of the assessment experience. They proposed a new set of objectives which retains the essential core but eliminates the redundancy and discipline-based implications of the old ones. The ten new objectives, adopted for implementation in the Fall 2000 semester, are not linked with discipline areas, thereby emphasizing their institutional rather than discipline-based importance and an institutional rather than departmental responsibility for teaching and assessing them.

The Student Academic Assessment Team has enthusiastically endorsed replicating the general education assessment project in spring 2000, using the new general education competencies.

Factors Fostering Success of the Project

Three key factors were instrumental in fostering success of the assessment project: high level leadership of the Student Academic Assessment Team and faculty involvement, viewing the project as a pilot, and refusal to attribute blame, praise, or excuses for student performances.

High level leadership of the Student Academic Assessment Team and the involvement of faculty in developing and scoring the prompts demonstrated both institutional commitment and faculty buy-in to the project. Faculty support was strengthened when, in the fall semester after the project took place, the Vice President for Academic Affairs suggested that the SAAT take the lead role in assessing general education outcomes, permitting individual departments teaching general education courses to concentrate their assessment efforts at the classroom, course, and program levels.

The College initiated and implemented this assessment project as a pilot. Doing so fostered senses of experimentation and relief. Faculty participants recognized that because this was a pilot, the process could be modified to accommodate to unforeseen difficulties or experiences. For example, moving from a five-part to a three-part scoring rubric was acceptable because a pilot project acknowledged that the institution was learning about the process of assessment in addition to learning about students' general education outcomes. Conceptualizing the project as a pilot implicitly gave the institution the permission to make mistakes as part if its own learning experience with assessment. Though not planned, the SAAT members and the prompt readers formed mini-learning communities where the topic of their learning was general education assessment.

Finally, in evaluating results, and particularly the low percentage of students meeting standards for communications, there has been no attribution of praise, blame, or excuses for student performances. Faculty seem to recognize that results may be due to a combination of factors: weaknesses in the assessment project itself, students' not taking seriously their work on the assessment prompt, lack of writing and communication competency, and other reasons may have all contributed to the results. This recognition has begun to spark good discussions among faculty about assessment as a process and about student learning outcomes and competencies.

The SAAT general education assessment was truly a college-wide effort, acknowledging that general education transcends individual disciplines and departments. The project may well become Oakton's primary method for assessing general education outcomes for Oakton students.

Notes

[1] We used the highest level composition (through English 101) or mathematics course a student had taken at Oakton, or the highest level of course into which the student placed if he had taken assessment tests but not enrolled in courses.

References

Devery, Penne, Scott Hickman, Ellen Rubert, and Lynne Curtis. December 1997. Report: Critical thinking assessment project 1996-1997. Unpublished paper. Grayslake, Ill.: College of Lake County.

Facione, Peter A. 1990. *The California critical thinking skills test-college level technical report 1: Experimental validation and content validity.* Millbrae: California Academic Press. (ED 015818)

Facione, Peter A., and Noreen C. Facione. 1992. *Test manual: The California critical thinking dispositions inventory.* Millbrae: California Academic Press.

Facione, Peter A., and Noreen C. Facione. 1994. Critical thinking ability: a measurement tool. *Assessment Update* 6(6):12-13.

Hummer, Anne. 1997. Measuring critical thinking outcomes via the capstone course paper. *Assessment Update* 9(3):8-9.

Miller, Allen H., Bradford W. Imrie, and Kevin Cox. 1998. *Student assessment in higher education: A handbook for assessing performance.* London: Kogan Page Limited.

Palomba, Catherine A., and Trudy W. Banta. 1999. *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pike, Gary R. 1995. The relationship between self-reports of college experiences and achievement test scores. *Research in Higher Education.* 36:1-22.

Pike, Gary R. 1996a. The Watson-Glaser critical thinking appraisal. *Assessment Update* 8(4):12-13.

Pike, Gary R. 1996b. Limitations of using students' self-reports of academic development as proxies for traditional achievement measures. *Research in Higher Education*. 37:89-114.

Seybert, Jeffrey A., and Kathleen A. O'Hara. 1997. Development of a performance-based model for assessment of general education. *Assessment Update* 9(4):5-7.

Walvoord, Barbara E., and Virginia Johnson Anderson. 1998. *Effective grading: A tool for learning and assessment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wolcott, Susan K. 1999. Developing and assessing critical thinking and lifelong learning skills through student self-evaluations. *Assessment Update* 11(4):4-5, 16.

Wood, Phillip Karl. 1997. Assessment measures: critical thinking assessment at the University of Missouri, Columbia. *Assessment Update* 9(6):11-13, 16.

Trudy Bers is Director of Research at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois.

B. Diane Davis is Chair, Behavioral and Social Studies, and President of the Faculty Senate at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois.

Mary L. Mittler is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois.

Using Statistics and a User-Friendly Workbook to Engage Faculty in the General Education Process across the Curriculum

Russell Watson
Janis Geesaman
Peter Klassen

With more than 30,000 students, College of DuPage is the largest single-campus community college in the country. That large number of students presents specific challenges with regard to assessment issues. However, our solution to those challenges may be a useful design to consider at community colleges of any size.

One paragraph of an executive summary of our eight-year history of the assessment initiative may be in order. College of DuPage has been actively engaged in the assessment process since 1993 when our Assessment Task Force wrote the Assessment Plan for the College. We completed our NCA self-study in 1994, which resulted in continued accreditation and the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. Our Assessment Plan was approved in 1995, and we began the classroom assessment portion of the plan in the midst of a re-organization at the College. After success in the classroom assessment ramp-up, we focused on the general education initiative in 1997, designing the model that will be discussed in this presentation.

The Student Outcomes Assessment committee was initially faced with five general education related issues to address prior to implementing a general education assessment design. The **first** issue was to explore a definition of general education. Two choices emerged: 1) to use the existing definition of general education as described in our College catalogue, or 2) to re-define general education. After exploration of both choices, and learning of other institutions that were encountering difficulty in developing a definition, the committee decided to adopt the definition of general education as printed in the college catalog (perhaps the path of least resistance, but at least working from an agreed upon standard.) To begin to create a "culture" of assessment at the College, we added a statement on assessment in the College catalog. (Both definition and statement are available in the College of DuPage catalog, and won't be reprinted here.)

The **second** primary issue regarded faculty involvement. With a full-time faculty of more than 300 and part-time faculty numbering 1200, some logistical issues needed to be considered. We began by involving full-time faculty, then expanded to part-time faculty. We also began with classroom-level assessment techniques and faculty development, then expanded to multi-section classes, and finally to general education college-wide. In this endeavor, we (SOA committee) wanted to engage faculty both in activities and relevant discussion on general education matters.

The assessment protocol became the **third** primary issue. Questions such as numbers of students to be assessed, numbers of sections of classes, and selection of specific classes were all part of the design protocol. Our answer here became a basic statistical one, which will be developed briefly in a few paragraphs below.

The **fourth** issue related to the participation protocol: required participation, voluntary participation, and should there be rewarded participation? All of these questions were considered, as well as the **fifth** and final of the primary issues, that of the instrumentation protocol. Should we use a self-developed instrument, or an off-the-shelf product?

Some Answers and Direction

Related to the selection issue, we decided to develop a stratified, proportionate random sample of classes with some unique statistical controls (to be discussed a bit later). After considering a self-developed instrument versus an off-the-shelf product, we discarded the idea of a self-developed instrument in favor of an assessment instrument that would have national and local norms available. We considered a variety of commercial instruments and gave a careful review of each. Our decision landed on the ACT/CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency) product because of three critical benefits: 1) it was a skills-based instrument, not a content-based instrument; 2) it could be implemented within a 50-minute period of time; and 3) there were six sub-tests covering all areas of general education–Math, Science Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing Skills, and Essay Writing. All six sub-tests were administered in all sections. For example, an English class with 30 students would have each student take one of the six sub-tests; five students would take the Math sub-test, five students would take the Science Reasoning sub-test, etc. This method also added a robust dimension to our random sample. Sections of mathematics took all six different sub-tests as well. (Each student in the class took only one of the sub-tests.)

Testing the entire population of students was unrealistic because of size of population, cost, and access of students. Required participation is not possible for an appropriate sample, and voluntary or rewarded participation has not resulted in a representative sampling. There are also some inherent problems with cross-sectional sampling. 1) The freshman "survival effect"–scores tend to improve between an entering freshmen cohort and freshmen at a later time because a part of dropping out is attributed to lower skills and lower effort by some students, leaving an artifact for higher scores not attributed to student learning progress. 2) The "reverse transfer effect"–not all students who complete much of their general studies at one college begin their studies at that college, preventing a study of increased skills by "home-grown" students as possible at a four-year college where one can track students from freshmen through seniors.

The Answer Emerged Through a Unique Statistical Design

The use of a course-based stratified proportionate random sampling of class sections encouraged a representative sampling of the population. Approximately 35 sections of classes were selected to include approximately 750 students; 125 in each of the six ACT/CAAP sub-tests. A random selection of entry level courses (100-level and early-sequence courses) are sampled during fall quarter. Assessing these classes provides a preponderance of students entering as freshmen and returning sophomores. A random selection of final courses (200-level and end-of-sequence courses) are sampled during spring quarter. Assessing these 200-level classes provides a preponderance of students completing their first year courses and completing their degree, certificate, or transfer courses. The sampling design results in sampling across a two-year cycle.

Controls for the freshmen "survival effect" occur by eliminating from the entry-level sample any students not enrolled during the following spring quarter. That is, removing students from the entry cohort who had not completed their first year at COD. Controls for "reverse transfer effect" were obtained by eliminating students in the sample who were not enrolled at COD for the beginning of their college studies. In this way we ended with a random sample of students who had taken their college courses exclusively at COD. While this eliminated many students from the statistical analysis, it provided a sample as "home-grown" as we could obtain from a community college environment.

Note that these issues may not be as great for some four-year institutions, but nevertheless, this design would be able to work effectively at a two- or four-year institution of any size. A multiple regression statistical model was selected because it allows for inclusion of most cases collected in a real world setting. In addition, regression modeling allows for the introduction of additional variables in analyzing a multi-year process.

The General Education Assessment Workbook

College of DuPage views the assessment process as a multi-level initiative beginning at the classroom level, then a discipline-wide and program level, then finally institutional assessment including general education. Like most assessment plans, the COD model is a four-step cyclical process: 1) assessment phase; 2) analysis phase; action phase; 4) feedback loop into assessment phase. Like some of our neighboring colleges, we experienced some difficulty in operationalizing the feedback loop.

One way by which we were able to overcome some of the operational difficulty was to develop a General Education Workbook to engage the faculty in understanding the general education assessment process at the college. Purposes of the workbook included: 1) to develop (or refresh) an understanding of general education at the college; 2) to identify the relationship of individual courses and instruction with developing general education competency; 3) to identify what responses (at individual, discipline, and institutional levels) might support improving students' general education competencies.

The logistics of the workbook involved distributing it in a paper format and on-line. Faculty were given two weeks to return their responses to the worksheets, and were encouraged to work both individually and in groups. Confidentiality of responses was assured, and a summary of all responses was produced. Five worksheets were used to create the full workbook input. Worksheet #1 centered on defining (and affirming the definition) of general education: How important is the relatsionship between each of the general education competencies and student success in your courses and discipline? Worksheet #2 summarized the contents of the individual CAAP tests with regard to the skill competency, and asked faculty to respond in writing: How are my instructional activities and pedagogical decisions impacted by this competency? Worksheet #3 explored responses to the test results. Worksheet #4 explored action plans for the future with regard to: What changes in your expectations, instructional activities, and pedagogy might strengthen students' development of general education competencies?

The results of the ACT/CAAP testing over three testing samples to date—Fall 1998, Spring 1999, and Fall 1999—have yielded substantial information that is of enormous benefit to the college community. Across the battery of six tests, our samples tested above the national means for public community college populations in the areas of Mathematics and Science Reasoning skills. Our samples were at national norms in the areas of Writing Skills, Essay Writing, and Critical Thinking tests. Finally, our population samples showed college level reading skills lower than national norms at the sophomore level. This information has served as a catalyst to explore a variety of areas in which college level reading skills are addressed. We are in the midst of planning a multi-threaded approach to assist in this area of academic development.

In conclusion, this ACT /CAAP testing model has assisted the college in obtaining a reliable and valid measurement of college level skills for our students. The robust statistical controls have helped to give us a real-time snapshot of our students' skills, and how the college can best amplify and develop those skills. For more information, the reader is encouraged to review this information in more detail through our website: www.cod.edu/outcomes

---

Russell Watson is Professor, Psychology, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Janis Geesaman is Associate Dean, Liberal Arts, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Peter Klassen is Professor of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Studies, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Chapter 7

Quest for Quality: Teaching

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Keeping Competitive with Business and Industry Training While Applying Performance Outcomes and Measuring for Efficiency and Effectiveness

Mary Ann Bazile
Keith Myers
Cindi Thiede

Introduction

Learning has traditionally been the job of our nation's more than 3,700 institutions of higher education. But, those were the days when graduation signified the end of formal learning and entering the workforce the beginning of the "real world." This paradigm is giving way to a new model of learning where working and learning are blending together into one seamless activity. Corporations are entering the world of continuous learning by creating corporate universities: in-house training departments that act as the strategic umbrella for educating and developing the entire value chain of the organization-employees, customers, dealers, and suppliers, says Adam Eisenstat of Corporate University Xchange, Inc., a New York City based corporate education research and consulting firm that assists organizations in optimizing their training resources.

Institutions of higher education, therefore, are realizing stiff competition for the adult and continuing education learner from these corporate universities who do not have to comply with expectations of accrediting agencies.

Higher education knows and is for the most part willing to "customize" adult and continuing education offerings to the time, pace, and place of business and industry. The real challenge here is for higher education not only to customize to time, pace, and place of business and industry but also to consistently provide performance-based learning that includes assessment of learner performances–in other words "test" that the business and industry learner can perform the skills taught in the training.

What is a Corporate University?

A corporate university is an educational organization established and run by a corporation. A corporate university is a *process* where employees in *partnership* with members of the value chain build individual and organizational competencies increasing the *performance* of the organization.

Corporate universities come in many shapes and sizes. Some, such as Motorola University, have campus locations around the globe. Others, such as Dell University, SunU, and Verifone University, have no campus at all. These companies have embraced the virtual university model to express their learning philosophy and commitment to continuous learning.

A corporate university is also responsible for shaping corporate culture and fostering the development of intangible skills such as leadership, creative thinking, and problem-solving. There are essentially four key drivers to launching a corporate university, namely desire to:

- ○ link learning to development to key business goals
- ○ create a systematic approach for the learning and development
- ○ spread a common culture and values across the organization
- ○ develop the employability of workers

A growing number of corporations are opting to call their education function a university because the message is clear: Learning is important, and therefore by using the metaphor of a university, the intent is grand. In addition, corporations are using the university model to brand their educational programs, courseware, and processes. Just as a successful consumer packaged goods firm brands its products, corporations are realizing that if they are going to spend millions of dollars in training their workforce, they need to brand the initiative in order to manage effectively the investment. It is estimated that the average corporate university has a budget of $17 million, or roughly 2% of the organization's payroll.

Increasingly, working adults want the same type of service from their educational provider that they currently receive from their bank or supermarket—convenience, accessibility, and 24-hour service. Just as one-stop financial shopping delivers convenient and accessible products and services to consumers, corporations are providing a similar level and type of service to the education market as they implement satellite-delivered learning to the corporate classroom and web-based college courses to the employee's desktop.

This has major implications for traditional universities and colleges.

- ◇ **Institutions of higher education need to customize outcomes to learners' needs in business and industry in order to stay competitive.** Business and industry often treat higher education like they do their other vendors (suppliers). Business and industry define the product they want, when they want the product, and what they want from the product. They expect the vendor to supply that product or service to those specifications. The same holds true with educational needs for their employees. As a result, institutions of higher education are challenged with customizing their products to meet the requests for continuing education of business and industry. It is not acceptable in business for the educational institution to provide a product that is just "close enough," or a product that has lots of "nice to know stuff" in it. Business has little patience for institutions of higher education that can't deliver a customized product because of internal educational issues like credit/hour formulas, workload issues, standard formats of delivery, time of day or location (time, pace, place).

  A standard course from an institution of higher education may have a well-defined set of learning outcomes and assessment measures. Once a course leaves the higher education environment for the business and industry environment, attention then needs to be given to the customization of the learning outcomes and assessment measures so they fit into the time, pace, and place of business and industry and carry the same educational value as in the higher education environment. The challenge for the educational institution is to recognize the need to customize learning outcomes and assessment measures to the expectations of the business purchasing the product. Otherwise, why would business and industry want to purchase continuing education from colleges and universities when they can produce their own customized product that matches their time, pace, and place through their own corporate universities?

- ◇ **Adult vocational and continuing education offerings must withstand the same performance-based rigor of higher education credits and meet the needs of business and industry.** There is now a gulf between the traditional continuing education product of institutions of higher education and the specifications of business and industry. It is agreed that higher education remains too focused on internal issues (credit/hour formulas, formats of delivery, etc.) to meet the specifications of business and industry. But the gulf widens when business and industry specify their desires for continuing education products without specified learning outcomes and/or assessment measures. For example, a business requests training in leadership with credit but specifies no tests. The college or university has courses and specific learning outcomes in leadership but for credit all carry an "assessment of performance" of these leadership outcomes. The assessment is not necessarily a "written test" as business may envision it but rather a "hands-on" approach to learners demonstrating their new skills. The business requesting the training or continuing education may very well at this point say, "forget it; we will do it ourselves (the corporate university). Yet, businesses are finding out that in order to have a successful corporate university and for their university to become accredited, they too must develop learning outcomes and performance-assessment measures.

So where do we go from here? Institutions of higher education already have a product or at least a solid process to develop a training or continuing education product. They have developed learning outcomes and performance-assessment measures. Business and industry want their employees to have continued training and education. Employees want the opportunity to "link" their continued training and education to a "certificate of performance" or perhaps the opportunity to continue on to a degree using their "training" through their employer.

◇ **Credits offered through adult vocational and continuing education (colleges and universities) need to "seamlessly" link to certificates and/or degrees when learners choose to link them.** The process of institutions of higher education delivering courses to business and industry through adult vocational and continuing education is often seen as a non-traditional approach. Credits earned through this non-traditional approach are often seen as not fitting into a program, certificate, or degree.

What complicates the process of seamless transition of continuing education offerings into programs, certificates, or degrees is that educational institutions, at the request of business and industry, usually deliver the training or course content in fractional components and in different sequences than are set for educational certificates, programs, or degrees. That combined with the nontraditional delivery issues conspires to make these educational experiences look like they won't fit with the needs of.business and industry. The challenge is to capture these educational experiences in such a way that when they are brought forward for inclusion into a program, certificate, or degree that there is no mystery as to what to do with them. There are several strategies to accomplish this seamless transition:

1. Use unique course numbering in identifying these educational experiences. Most course numbering processes allow for customization of one or more of the digits to reflect the unique delivery and perhaps content of these offerings.
2. Reflect the uniqueness of the offering in the course title.
3. Design program courses with flexibility in offering fractional credit to accommodate or to fill out a course requirement not completely achieved through non-traditional offerings.

Programs that are learner focused will provide multiple strategies to integrate the prior experiences of the learner into credits towards the requirements of a program, certificate, or degree versus the insistence of forcing the learner into the constraints of the program by requiring that all credits be taken without respect to prior learning.

◇ **Benefits to both business and industry and higher education.** Higher education benefits from the link of credits earned by business and industry learners to certificate, program, and/or degree credits for those learners who choose to "thread" their credits into such a formal culmination.

- The partnership with business and industry becomes a "feeder" initiative for more learners to completion of certificates, programs, and degrees in higher education (more FTEs for higher education).
- Higher education collects data from the performance assessment activities to demonstrate for accreditation purposes that learners can perform skills as a result of their experience with higher education.
- Higher education can use these data to market their educational offerings to other business and industry organizations.

◇ **Business and industry benefits in some of the same ways.**

- High employee incentive can occur to take training sponsored by their organization and delivered by an institution of higher education and perform at a required level when credit is granted for the training that will easily transfer into a certificate, program, or degree.
- Business and industry are assured that their employees can "perform" the skills presented in the training because higher education is assessing such performance through performance-based assessment activities whether or not the employee uses such training towards a certificate, etc.

  - Employees are motivated to perform on the job at their newly demonstrated skill level thus benefiting the organization.

- **Higher education needs to "seamlessly" administer performance-based assessments to business and industry learners that do not add to the time, pace, and place formula.** Institutions of higher education need to seamlessly integrate performance-based assessments (tests) into the training they offer to business and industry. They need to integrate these assessments in such a way that they do not add to the length of the training nor dilute the skills that need to be learned and demonstrated in such training, thus honoring the time, pace, and place requirements of business and industry. Furthermore, higher education needs to document that skills were learned and can be demonstrated.

  Several tools to be considered for such documentation include:

  - gap analysis
  - spidergram (visual representation of increased level of skill)
  - quantitative surveys

Conclusion

Corporate universities, as well as virtual universities and for-profit education firms, have sprung up to serve the needs of working adults. These new entrants to the educational system have emerged and proliferated because they offer a market-driven model of education with a focus on convenience, self-service, and uniformity of product. As a group these entrants represent both an opportunity for partnering as well as direct competition to the traditional educational system.

Institutions of higher education have as a result of these corporate universities, suffered severe competition for the educational needs of working adults, a market they once solely provided. To complicate matters for higher education, accrediting agencies, in 1995, began requiring that Higher Education prove and show documentation that assessment of learners' performance was achieved in a "direct" manner other than the "standard" written test and grades. This requirement has severely complicated higher education's relationship with business and industry who have already indicated that they want "no assessments" with higher education's training of their working adults.

Institutions of higher education are in the midst of figuring out how they can compete with corporate universities that do not need to be accredited while meeting the new assessment requirements of accreditation for higher education.

Mary Ann Bazile is Teaching and Learning Outcome Assessment Partner at Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Keith Myers is Corporate and Community Services Partner at Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Cindi Thiede is Vice President of Teaching and Learning at Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Best Practices for Faculty Research/ Scholarship Development in the Master's Comprehensive/ Doctoral Environment

Peter J. Kasvinsky
Katy E. Marre

Over the past decade there have been tremendous changes in the expectations placed on colleges and universities throughout the United States. State legislatures have been especially active in the change process with demands for more accountability. Increased pressure has been brought to bear on state supported research universities to become more involved in the teaching and learning of undergraduates. At the same time, there are also demands that universities and colleges become more active in state, regional, and local economic development initiatives. Both public and private universities maintain outreach activities in support of their communities in order to meet these goals.

Several important questions need to be asked and answered in order to understand the dynamics associated with these seemingly opposite objectives. How can outreach and community economic development goals be met with a limited resource base and research infrastructure? Virtually every college and university mission statement blandly states that the faculty will be involved in disciplinary research contributing to the application and/or discovery of new knowledge in their fields. How can this be accomplished in a primarily teaching institution that does not have a strong faculty research tradition? How does one muster the resources and institutional support needed to build the infrastructure and scholarly culture necessary to sustain these important goals and meet the expectations placed on our institutions? Finally, what qualitative and quantitative levels of research involvement should the institution seek to attain?

Youngstown State University is a medium-sized Carnegie Master's I Comprehensive institution whose current mission includes the integration of teaching, research (scholarship), and public service roles of its faculty. Because Youngstown State is a regional metropolitan university, faculty have been encouraged to seek external funding in support of scholarly and teaching agendas as a major step in establishing a research supportive infrastructure.

Prior to 1991, Youngstown State University was minimally involved in sponsored program development, and faculty research was focused on individuals using limited internal resources. Some state resources, particularly from the Ohio Board of Regents' Research Challenge Fund, were broadly distributed among a number of faculty with minimal expectations for grants development as an outcome. Teaching excellence was the major criterion for tenure and promotion, and the scholarship of teaching and learning was only moderately emphasized. Within the greater Youngstown community, after the collapse of the steel industry in the Pittsburgh-Cleveland corridor, the university was a place where students could gain the credentials needed to migrate out of the region. The university was an exporter of its graduates.

With the arrival of new administrative leadership in the early 1990s, the university sought to establish a more active role in the community in response to obvious needs and changing expectations for higher education throughout Ohio. Institutional activities included a major development campaign, campus development and expansion, the establishment of off-campus outreach centers in the metropolitan area, sponsored program and grant development, and the initiation of a university-wide goals-oriented planning process down to the level of departments, in particular within the Academic Affairs Division. Institutional changes have been staggering on a short time scale. In the area of grants and sponsored program development, which reflects overall faculty research and scholarship involvement, total extramural funding received for fiscal year 1991 was $327,000, of which $98,000 was faculty initiated. In fiscal year 1999, $2,011,000 in total extramural funding was received, with $1.4 million as faculty initiated. Overall funding was up by 600%, but faculty initiated funding was up by over 1,400%. During the peak funding year (fiscal year 1998), total funding received was $3.0 million and the faculty initiated proportion was $2.1 million, more than 2,100% greater than the 1991 level of activity. For the current fiscal year, last year's $2.0 million in total funding has already been exceeded in the first six months.

These results showing positive changes in the level of extramural funding support the notion that faculty scholarship and research in any institution needs to be structured so that it aids the institution in becoming a "magnet" or "importer" of intellectual capital, which are its students, faculty, extramural grants, gifts, etc. Thus, students and prospective faculty seek out an institution whose reputation, research, and scholarly achievements are highly acclaimed whether focused on undergraduate teaching and learning research for a baccalaureate institution, or on a mixture of basic and applied research for a master's institution, or on a theoretical research base at doctoral and research institutions. In each case the institution must encourage its faculty to compete nationally in order to meet the criteria necessary to be an importer of intellectual capital and attain the validation necessary to initiate and achieve a self-sustaining cultural transition. For Youngstown State University, change in the mode of operation from the "exportation" role of the early 1990s to the "importation" role of the late 1990s has begun to gel in a number of areas, including external funding as grants, sponsored programs, and development funds; in faculty recruitment; and in graduate student recruitment.

In order to encourage faculty research and scholarship and provide the seed necessary to grow external funding, an institution must come to grips with the resource issue. Reward systems in the form of favorable tenure and promotion policies, reassigned (release) time, travel funds (especially for trips to funding agencies), research assistant support, seed funds for supplies and equipment, and especially "match" funds for equipment grants are needed to promote faculty interest. Faculty reassigned (release) time should be given to the authors of successful grant applications, not for grant preparation. Such an approach ensures a quality proposal with a reward for accomplishment and success. In addition, the institution needs to develop standardized policies to promote investment in research and grant seeking. A policy that sets aside some institutional resources based on indirect cost recovery and invests those resources as seed funding for research and faculty scholarly development is one of the most effective ways to build infrastructure. Support of the deans will quickly result if salary savings, from the replacement (with part-timers) of full-time faculty released from teaching for grant-related work, remain within the college to support faculty research and scholarly development. A portion of any funds normally available for academic equipment purchases should be reserved as "match" for grant applications, especially for those grants related to mathematics, science, and engineering curriculum development. By this mechanism institutional resources are multiplied by leveraging of internal funds with external grant funds and, at the same time, the institution gains in prestige and equipment resources.

An important element of research and scholarly development in seeking external support at Youngstown State University was the establishment of an Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs. This unit assists faculty in identifying external agency resources and preparation of proposals and proposal budgets. This office **does not write proposals.** Principal investigators and project directors are always the primary authors of all proposal and grant applications. Only in this way can the university and the funding agency be assured that the grant or funded proposal will deliver what was intended by its authors. Obviously, the grants office can assist in making a proposal clear to its audience, but that does not include writing the grant. A useful mechanism to improve proposal submissions is the formation of an internal "grants review committee" within specific departments or on an *ad hoc* basis for specific competitions. In the recent Ohio Board of Regents competition for technology infrastructure development and distance learning equipment, Youngstown State University has obtained awards for four of five proposals in three years, totaling about $2 million in capital equipment. The proposals for these competitive grants were reviewed by an *ad hoc* peer review committee of faculty and administrators and **could not** be submitted to the Ohio Board of Regents until committee suggestions were appropriately dealt with to the satisfaction of the committee. Some proposals never left the campus.

Departmental "Grants Committees" can also be of great help in building the scholarly research culture. Our Department of Chemistry has such a faculty committee that meets annually to discuss what proposals will be prepared by faculty and to which funding agencies the proposals will be submitted. This approach has been especially valuable for institutional proposals for equipment in order to build the teaching and research oriented infrastructure of the science departments. The committee provides the internal checks at the departmental level so that appropriate coordination of faculty time and grants involvement occurs. In this department the funding record supports this approach since collectively the department has obtained well over $2 million in external funding over the last six years.

A critical issue in the distribution of internal resources for faculty research and scholarship development is to require that all internal proposals include a section on how the research will make the faculty participants more competitive in seeking external funding *if external funding is generally available to the discipline.* At Youngstown State University virtually all internal funding for research requires such an analysis and external leveraging plan.

One relatively new institutional program has been established in order to encourage the seeking of external funding, collaboration in interdisciplinary fields, collaboration with other universities or industry, and student research experiences. This PACER Center program (Presidential Academic Centers for Excellence in Research) was initiated in 1997-1998 by a request for proposals for the first three-year funding cycle and was funded by the use of deans' reassigned time, departmental match, University Research Council Funding, and Ohio Board of Regents funding from the Research Challenge Fund. All reviews of proposals were by an *external* review panel of graduate deans and research officers from a wide variety of disciplines. Initial cash funding was $240,000 for three "Centers" for three years, with an additional $280,000 from college and departmental matching funds to provide for release, student assistants, and related needs. Cash funding could only be used for equipment, supplies, travel, or student research assistant employment. The key elements of the PACER program were as follows:

- The Centers were to become self-sustaining over a three-five year period.
- The Centers were to be "focused" on collaborative research problems rather than a collective of individual research problems. Collaboration could be interdepartmental, between colleges, interinstitutional, or with industry partners.
- The proposals were to be externally peer reviewed, in order to limit internal politics.
- There would be no administrative funding for management of the Centers. All funds were to be used for research productivity.
- All proposals needed to demonstrate ongoing research productivity or the demonstrated potential for such activities.
- The Centers were to encourage student research experiences at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Initially, three Centers would be funded at approximately $20,000 to $25,000 each per year. After three years, a detailed re-evaluation would occur for an additional two years of reduced funding.
- On each three-year cycle, a new RFP (Request for Proposals) would seek to identify new areas of collaboration for focus and development.

The PACER program has, after two years, generated some $655,000 in external funding by conservative estimates, which excluded non-research-related funds to the faculty in the program. Based on the $160,400 cash investment, we view the program as an initial success with a leveraging ratio of 4.1 to 1, comparing funds generated to investment.

At the University of Dayton, which is currently also a Master's I Comprehensive institution, the focus has been on governmental/industrial collaboration in engineering. Situated in Dayton, Ohio, the location of a major Air Force research center (Wright Laboratories), the university is uniquely positioned to engage in such collaborations. As at Youngstown State University, internal commitments have been leveraged successfully. The University of Dayton has given considerable attention to developing its research capabilities in two ways: through interdisciplinary activity in research and teaching and through interinstitutional collaborations.

Faculty in Electrical Engineering, Physics, and the University of Dayton Research Institute recognized the value in converging their research strengths into the area of Electro-Optics. The newly established doctoral program in Electro-Optics in turn brought three rounds of federal funding through the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) Program in 1995 for $546 K, in 1998 for $560 K, and in 1999 for $202 K. The coalition of research strengths became an avenue for further opportunity.

The University's planning document, *Vision 2005,* calls for integration through interdisciplinary endeavors to expand significantly the economy of our region. There is general agreement that a focus on interdisciplinary research university-wide is probably the smartest and most efficient way to develop research capabilities at a teaching and research institution like the University of Dayton. Support for that focus has not lagged, and there are in place two internal research award competitions. The criteria used as a basis for evaluation of the 1999 Interdisciplinary Research Grants clearly show the support for interdisciplinary research projects that

- involved internal or external collaborations (other Ohio universities or researchers from industry);
- produced research that is of a theoretical or practical significance;
- provided strong evidence that the proposed research is attracting external support from business, industry, foundations, State or federal sources.

Because this award includes State funding under the Research Challenge Program, the criteria require the application to show its impact on State economic development.

Expanding on Michael Fogarty's metaphor of "import"-"export" of intellectual property resulting from research and development in a region and its impact on the region and state to interdisciplinary research in an academic institution (Fogarty 1999), we may envision capturing an institution's research strengths within its own internal network. This often results in new programs, new research directions, and in more external research funding. With regard to the market, Fogarty explains that once something moves in a direction, it keeps moving in that direction. Taking our cue from that, once there is support in the institution for a specific research focus, as for example interdisciplinary at Dayton and Youngstown, the internal "knowledge flow" of education and research converges internally in different ways to attract or "import" outstanding faculty and research funds. An institution thus is an "importer" of strong faculty and research funds rather than an "exporter" whose competitive faculty move away and whose research funding does not grow significantly. In the absence of defined institutional research foci, the research flow often is "exported" to other regions (often out of the state) that are magnets for specific research technologies. Thus, an institution has to be smarter in capturing its own faculty's research strengths, and equally importantly, be very strategic about it.

The Summer Faculty Research Seed Grant Award is more open-ended. It supports both interdisciplinary and other research. The report at the completion of the grant asks the faculty member to indicate plans to search for external funding in the area for which the seed grant was awarded. It asks, for example: What kind of external funding is being sought? What external funding was considered as a source for developing the proposal? What OhioLink and other databases for external funding have been explored? What funding has been obtained in the past? If there is a proposal for a Seed Grant the following year by the same applicant, then the report on the previous year's award, including answers to the questions above, is used as a basis for evaluation of the proposal. In this way there is a continuous move to strengthen faculty research. In the early 1990s, the University research (including the Research Institute) total was at $36 M; in the mid '90s it was in excess of $45 M; in 1998, the University total was 46.7 M.

Interinstitutional collaboration is another way the University of Dayton has developed faculty research. The University is a full partner with Wright State University and the Air Force Institute of Technology in the Dayton area Graduate Studies Institute (DAGSI) in engineering. DAGSI consortial collaboration has Ohio State University and University of Cincinnati as cooperating partners. It is designed to be a seamless consortial graduate coalition with a strong research base connected with Wright Laboratories at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. It allows the University of Dayton to develop its education and research activities by combining its research strengths with those of other neighboring institutions. The University of Dayton and its full partners in the southwest Ohio region conduct a significant amount of research in engineering and technology. Individually, they are strong research institutions that represent key assets for the Dayton area; together, they represent a coalition of resources that is best-in-class for similar consortia. The coalition focuses on high quality graduate education and research. What does this mean for the University of Dayton? It means that it can partner with a state university, and federal and state organizations, to provide its students and faculty with access to education and research opportunities. It also means that DAGSI can enhance significantly its ability to do advanced research and technology.

What conclusions then can we draw that answer questions posed at the beginning of this paper about incentives that support faculty involved in disciplinary research contributing to the application and/or discovery of new knowledge in their fields, and that build a research-supportive infrastructure?

- An institution can structure and focus faculty scholarship and research so that it aids an institution in becoming a "magnet" that "imports," or attracts intellectual capital–faculty, students, community coalitions, extramural funding, and gifts. The institution has to work smarter to capitalize on its education and research strengths and be very strategic about focusing them for increasing external funds, and for new faculty and graduate student recruitment.
- Reward systems of tenure and promotion, reassigned (research) time, travel funds for faculty and students need to reflect an institution's education and research foci.

- Internal seed research grants for faculty, undergraduate and graduate student research, matching funds for research equipment proposals from faculty, and release time for faculty authors of successful grant applications are some incentives for consideration.
- Research seed grant applications require applicants to indicate their specific plans to search for external funding in the area for which the seed grant was awarded and to explain how the research will make the faculty member more competitive in seeking external funding.
- Standardized policies need to be in place for research, which set aside some institutional resources based on indirect cost recovery for investment in seed grant funding.
- An Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs can be instrumental in coordinating institution-wide efforts in encouraging and supporting faculty and student research activities.
- Departmental "Grants Committees" can encourage and support departmental efforts in research. Such a committee can build and focus on a department faculty's collective knowledge of research in their discipline.
- Internal faculty and student collaboration in interdisciplinary initiatives, intrainstitutional collaboration, and collaboration with industry and businesses that include student research experiences, contribute to building a research infrastructure that acknowledges the importance of scholarship and research.

Reference

Fogarty, Michael (Professor of Economics and Director of the Center for Economic Development, Weatherhead School of Business, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio). 1999. Paper presented February 23 at the Economic Development Conference sponsored by the Ohio Board of Regents.

Peter J. Kasvinsky is Dean of Graduate Studies at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio.

Katy E. Marre is Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research at University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio.

The Changing Roles of Faculty: The Role of Adjunct in Adult Degree Programs

Cheryl Stacy

As institutions meet the increasing demand for adult degree programs, a nationwide dialogue continues about the quality of such offerings. Assuring institutional integrity while providing adult learners with alternative forms of degree completion is a concern for many. Institutions increasingly rely on part-time faculty to meet the escalating enrollment and high expectations of the adult student population.

Do part-time instructors fully understand the values of the institution? Is the educational experience similar for adult learners taught by adjunct as compared to those taught by regular full-time faculty? Are student learning outcomes measured the same by adjunct faculty in comparison to regular faculty in the assignment of grades? What are the advantages and challenges of employing adjunct as an integral element of adult degree programs? Ultimately, what are the best practices in adult degree programs in relationship to the roles of regular and adjunct faculty?

In attempting to address the issues, one can look to the literature, professional organizations, and institutional data for possible solutions. For this inquiry, a review of literature defines "quality" in relationship to adult degree programs (ADP). Theory is linked to practice in professional organizations' initiatives that offer guidelines to enhance "quality" in ADPs. Lastly, quality improvement processes are combined with best practices in a study of an adult degree completion program.

Quality

Quality and academic excellence have always been the goals of higher education. The public demand of colleges to provide quality programming has not escaped adult degree programs. Working adults and their employers are expecting the most from an investment in education: quality of curriculum, availability of options, and success of program completion. Expectations of adult learners are high and present new challenges to academe.

To deal with the demands, colleges are implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) strategies borrowed from business. TQM is a comprehensive philosophy of living and working in an organization that deliberately focuses on continuous quality improvement. The fundamental purpose of TQM is to improve quality, increase productivity, and decrease cost. CQI recognizes that the process is ongoing, a cycle that is never completely finished. This could not be a truer statement of the expectations of adult degree programs. Individuals and reimbursing employers are demanding quality in adult degree programs, while institutions promote increased enrollment at reduced costs of providing such programs. Administrators must negotiate the agendas of all parties involved and meet the needs of as many constituencies as possible.

In this context, quality is defined as a "distinguishing attribute of fineness, or grade of excellence" in adult degree programs. Quality is embedded in the design, delivery and outcomes of adult degree programs. Integrating quality processes at each stage of program design, delivery and evaluation, creates continuous quality improvement in ADPs. It is a comprehensive approach, adding value at each successive phase of the program.

Borrowed from the TQM literature and authorities such as Deming, Juran, and Crosby, the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle is a process that applies the scientific method to adult degree program planning. As stated in the acronym, the first step is to PLAN what should be done. By collecting available data, one can determine the current status of a program and develop a plan of action that targets specific goals. Second, DO test the plan in a limited setting, controlling the variables as much as possible to CHECK the results. With positive results, ACT on the plan program-wide. Revise, or start over, if necessary. The goal is a progressive succession of continuous improvement with each step of the design, delivery, and evaluation process. In relationship to adult education, process improvement 1) should occur at every stage in the program: its design, delivery, and evaluation, and 2) should be measured against data points to show progress, making data collection necessary. Observations characterizing administration of TQM/CQI for ADP's are:

- the primary job of an administrator is to remove the barriers that prevent people from achieving quality processes,
- the most valuable knowledge about how to improve the work process resides in the people who work the process,
- administrators must listen and create a supportive environment that values cross-functional teams that communicate frequently with each other about CQI,
- cooperation must replace competition and positioning within institutions, and
- education and training cannot be overstated. (Chaffee & Sherr,1992).

Quality processes are based on quality principles. Quality principles are a personal philosophy and organizational culture that utilizes scientific outcomes measurement, systematic management techniques, and collaboration to achieve the mission of the institution. The power of quality principles come from the synergy of the whole system, fundamentally linking the mission to measurable outcomes (Freed, *et al.* 1997). Eight quality principles have emerged in adult degree programs:

1. The mission of the institution is congruent with outcomes of the ADP.
2. The program is systems-dependent: all operations work in unison toward common goals.
3. Systematic individual development is encouraged and supported for all faculty and staff.
4. Decisions are based on fact, progress is measured by data.
6. Collaboration of all faculty and staff for the design, delivery, and evaluation is essential.
7. Planning for change is considered at each stage of the process.
8. Leadership creates and supports a "quality" culture.

One can observe that quality processes of Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle are congruent with the quality principles. Combined, they create a philosophy of individual commitment and advance an organizational culture that promotes quality in every aspect of the ADP.

Theory to Practice

Having established the literature base of quality in relationship to adult degree programs, one can move from the theoretical to practical application. Professional organizations are instrumental in providing guidelines by which institutions develop strategies for effective ADPs. North Central Association (NCA) appointed a task force in 1999 that specifically looked at issues concerning adult degree completion programs. Adult education administrators anticipate the findings of the task force. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) conducted an extensive benchmarking study that resulted in significant findings for ADPs. The book *Best Practices in Adult Learning* is a result of the study. Administrators can utilize information from these sources to develop adult degree programs that best fit the home institution's values, vision, and mission.

North Central Association addresses institutional mission throughout the *Handbook of Accreditation*. Specifically, the *Handbook* addresses the role of faculty in General Institutional Requirements nine, ten, and eleven. NCA also suggests that in relation to its Criteria for Accreditation "patterns and indicators using multiple contexts or frameworks" assist in evaluation. As stated:

- The institution itself articulates its mission, purposes, and objectives.
- The Commission takes seriously its belief in continuous improvement and how well the institution has progressed since its last evaluation.

- ○ What generally is recognized as good practice at benchmark or "peer" institutions can be considered as one of the "indicators" in evaluation (pg.31).

Noting NCA's comments gives good reason to look at CAEL's study closely.

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) sponsored a benchmarking study that has been published in an executive summary and book form. Benchmarking has emerged as a useful, easily understood and effective tool in research. It is an ongoing, systematic process for measuring and comparing work processes of one organization to that of another. Among the questions benchmarking asks is "how are we doing in comparison to others" and "can we adopt that to our institution?" (Alstete, 1995). CAEL's study identified several best practices of Adult Learner Focused Institutions (ALFIs), discussed thoroughly in the book.

The key findings prompted the research conducted for this paper. One key finding was that of *flexibility*. "Flexibility and expectation of change pervade every aspect of the culture…faculty roles, administrative structure, instructional modes…delivery times and practices, and day-to-day interactions with adult learners" (pg.7) are common in ALFIs. Another finding was *mission*, the ALFI "has a clearly articulated mission that permeates the institution and inspires and directs practice" (pg.7). The findings are supported in the literature and the discussion of quality earlier. Of particular interest to the research of this paper are the findings on faculty roles.

> Faculty at the ALFI function as managers and facilitators of the learning process, not just dispensers of information…faculty work with adult learners, staff, adjunct faculty, and local community resources to develop rich, collaborative experiences. The result is that faculty do not limit themselves to the traditional role.…Faculty are willing to work in a variety of blended roles which may include administrative duties, advising and teaching (pg.10).

This finding emphasizes the expanded role of regular faculty in ADPs. Most important to the focus of this paper, and to continue with the CAEL study, is the role of adjunct faculty in ADPs.

> Part-time and adjunct faculty at the ALFI are valued for their connections to workplaces and communities; and providing an accessible and flexible curriculum…They serve as a vital link between the institution and the community…these faculty are particularly valued for their professional expertise and connections to the workplace…adult learners rely on these faculty members to learn "how it really is" in their career field and to help them make professional contacts (pg.12).

This author posits that the quotation can be expanded to include regular faculty as connections to the community as well as adjunct. Furthermore, adjunct faculty can play a role in the professional development of full-time counterparts, bringing "how it really is" to the campus environment. Mentoring partnerships between regular and adjunct faculty can enhance the teaching effectiveness of both parties, in content and subject matter as well as in andragogical practices. Not only do adult students benefit from the part-time and adjunct contact, but the institution itself benefits as well in the community connections. Regular faculty benefit in professional expertise of adjunct; adjunct benefit from involvement in the decision-making processes of ADP on campus.

The literature review focused on quality and improvement. NCA guidelines supported benchmarking as an influence on evaluation. CAEL's benchmarking study identified best practices in ADPs and supported blended roles of both regular full-time and part-time adjunct faculty. With all in congruence—the literature, NCA, and CAEL—it is reasonable to pursue strong adjunct faculty involvement in adult degree programs.

However, there are advantages and distinct challenges to incorporating part-time and adjunct faculty into the college community and governance structures. For clarification, regular faculty are defined as full-time employees of the institution, whose primary employment is with the institution and whose primary responsibilities are instructional (NCA *Handbook of Accreditation)*. Adjunct faculty roles and responsibilities are not as comprehensive as full-time faculty because their primary work is in business, industry, agencies, unions, and volunteer organizations in the local and professional community (CAEL). For the purposes of this paper, adjuncts are employed full-time in other occupations; therefore, cannot participate fully in the day-to-day functions and activities of the campus. Part-time faculty may or may not be employed full-time in other occupations, but for one reason or another, are not employed full-time by the college.

The Changing Roles of Faculty

The utilization of adjunct and part-time faculty have consequences for both the institution and the individual. When planning for best practices in Adult Degree Programs, administrators should take all aspects into consideration. An overview of the advantages and challenges is listed, but the list is not exhaustive. Determining those aspects that apply for ADPs at one's home institution is helpful in considering the utilization of adjuncts for the adult program.

Advantages of Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty in Adult Degree Programs	**Challenges of Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty in Adult Degree Programs**
1. Flexibility in scheduling: times, days, terms, unusual hours; flexibility in staffing.	1. Fewer full-time faculty positions available campus and nationwide.
2. Management of enrollment fluctuations.	2. Fewer faculty to support campus governance structure, committee work.
3. Versatility in course offerings.	3. Fewer faculty to share in curriculum development.
4. Adaptability to and adjustment for new course requests.	4. Fewer faculty to share in formulation and implementation of policy.
5. Up-to-date knowledge brought to campus.	5. Fewer faculty to share in benefit pools based on campus participation.
6. Professionalism in practice modeled for students.	6. Assurances that college mission is imbued in course delivery and instruction.
7. Community contacts with business, industry, service professions.	7. Stability of the institution due to turnover in short-term faculty.
8. College representation in professional organizations in community.	8. Stability of programs heavily dependent on adjunct involvement.
9. Recruitment.	9. Lack of long-term commitment and continuous employment of adjunct.
10. Willingness to teach off-site and expand college outreach.	10. Lower salaries and benefits for adjunct, no health insurance or retirement.
11. Enrich academic environment with "real world expertise."	11. Lack of negotiating power for adjunct regarding pay increases and promotion.
12. Cost savings in salaries, benefits.	12. Lack of involvement in activities, sense of isolation, rejection of ideas.
13. Cost savings in facility space and staff services.	13. Lack of influence in curriculum development, revisions, and delivery methods.
14. Adjunct are rarely seeking full-time, continued employment.	14. Lack of support services: clerical assistance, personnel, office contact.
15. Adjunct rarely are seeking promotion to higher paying, permanent positions.	15. Lack of facility privileges: office space, copying machines, technology.
16. Professional fulfillment for the individual.	16. Role ambiguity, lack of in-service training opportunities.
17. Professional development for the individual in current occupational practices.	17. Overuse, exploitation.
18. Continued professional involvement for transition to retirement.	18. No guarantee of continued employment.
19. Increased income.	19. Limit regular faculty in versatility of teaching experiences and overloads.
20. Contribution to and advancement of profession.	20. Isolation of programs heavily dependent on adjunct in campus community activities, participation and involvement.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The list of advantages and challenges of employing adjunct as an integral contributor to ADPs is not exhaustive. It is a suggested starting point in considering the use of adjunct in adult programs. Institutions will have unique characteristics that have an impact on the employment of part-time faculty. "However, the idea that employment of part-time faculty is a casual departmental affair rather than an institutional effort is obsolete" (Gappa, 1984). "Integration of part-time faculty into college communities is not only possible, but necessary" (Gappa , Leslie 1993, Roueche, Roueche and Milliron, 1995). Adjunct involvment is established as a best practice in ADPs.

It is easy to assign adjunct to classes in the area of expertise. Yet, how does a program administrator integrate adjunct faculty into the college community? To answer this, one can turn to the ADCP cycle and quality processes of CQI.

Gratton and Walleri (1993) advise "An integrated systems approach, with staff vitality at the center, can increase success of management initiatives in an institutional effectiveness program." Linkages between adjunct and regular faculty have to be intentionally made by the staff and administrators of ADPs. The connection between institutional mission and staff, program, and organizational development include administrators, faculty, and support staff (McHargue 1993). It is a deliberate effort on the part of the ADP administrator to see that adjunct are fully integrated into campus life.

An obvious place to introduce regular faculty to adjunct faculty is in staff-development and training processes. Carefully managed collaborative partnerships can enrich academic life of all the members involved (Austin and Baldwin 1992). Mentoring partnerships between regular and adjunct faculty can greatly increase the quality of ADPs, as well as the effectiveness of staff training and development. This author suggests a new mentoring partnership paradigm: where regular faculty's teaching and content expertise converge with adjunct faculty's professional know-how and wisdom gained experientially, to improve the quality of ADPs. Administrators should deliberately match a regular faculty member with an adjunct faculty member who share subject matter content in teaching. This is a cost-effective way to upgrade skills, enhance recruitment, and retention and increase job satisfaction (Jossi 1997) for faculty servicing ADPs.

This move towards group mentoring creates an environment for and support of a faculty learning group within the learning organization. Members of the diverse learning group learn from each other. The mentor-partners share multiple perspectives within and outside of the organization. They provide a wide range of expertise to each other both about specific organizational politics and culture as well as broader trends in a profession or field....Mentoring is a personalized and systematic way to be socialized into an organization's culture; and such cultural competence is important in both work and academic setting" (Kerka, 1998).

Thus, CQI is achieved in the adult program through staff development, which has an impact on the design, delivery, and evaluation of the ADP.

Application of the quality process and ADCP cycle was conducted at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest in an adult degree completion program. A theory was developed (PLAN) and data collected to compare regular to adjunct faculty in assignment of grades, GPAs, and program completion rates. A difference was detected between regular and adjunct assignments of grades. As an intervention for adjunct faculty, a luncheon and information sharing meeting was introduced as a trial to improve communication between adjunct and the administrator (DO). From the positive results of the meeting, (CHECK), the decision was made to implement evening adjunct meetings program-wide (ACT). The results of the study are discussed in the hand-out. The Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle was completed that resulted in program quality improvement for the Adult Degree Program at the college.

In summary, one can look to the literature and guidance from professional organizations to develop best practices in adult degree programs. TQM and CQI strategies can be implemented that produce results. The role of faculty can be expanded to include mentoring partnerships between regular and adjunct members to increase the teaching effectiveness of both while advancing best practices in adult degree programs for all involved.

References

Alfano, K. 1994. Recent strategies for saçulty development. ED 371807.

Alstete, J. W. 1995. Benchmarking in higher education: Adapting best practices to improve quality. (ED 402800).

Austin, A. E., and R. G. Baldwin. 1992. Faculty collaboration: Enhancing the quality of scholarship and teaching. (ED 347958).

Banachowski, G. 1997. Advantages and disadvantages of employing part-time faculty in community colleges. (ED 405037).

Chaffee, E. E., and L. A. Sherr. 1992. Transforming postsecondary education. (ED 350972).

Freed, J., et. al. 1997. A culture for academic excellence: Implementing the quality principles in higher education. (ED 406962).

Gappa, J. 1984. Part-time faculty: Higher education at a crossroads. *ERIC Digest* 84-4. (ED284513).

Kerka, S. 1998. New perspectives in mentoring. *ERIC Digest* no.194 (ED418249).

Lankard, B. A. 1993. Part-time instructors in adult and vocational education. (ED 363797).

Luna, G. 1995. Empowering the faculty: Mentoring, redirected and renewed. (ED 399888).

Oromaner, M. 1998. Faculty and staff development. (ED 416941).

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA/CIHE). 1997. *Handbook of accreditation.* Chicago: NCA/CIHE

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). 1999. *Serving adult learners in higher education: Findings from CAEL's benchmarking study executive summary.* Chicago: CAEL.

Cheryl Stacy is Director of Organizational Management at Bluffton College in Bluffton, Ohio.

Toward More Self-Reflective Teaching: A Model for Integrating the Use of Classroom Assessment, Peer Observation and Review, Rubrics, and a Course Portfolio as Discipline-Based Faculty Development

Karla Brown

How would you visualize the ideal college student? How would she approach reading the materials for her courses? What kind of mental attitude would he bring to his classes everyday? What would her participation and engagement in her course work look like? Adjectives such as "enthusiastic," "engaged," "involved," and "reflective" probably come to mind. While the secret to turning most college students into such avid learners perhaps remains elusive, the course model described in this paper and the presentation at the Annual Meeting accomplish such goals for college teachers themselves.

In a May 1999 issue of the *AAHE Bulletin,* Thomas Angelo critiques the surface-level changes that assessment efforts have made at most institutions so far and calls for a more transformative approach to assessment and institutional improvement. He asserts that, "assessment efforts have resulted in little learning improvement because they have been implemented without a clear vision of what 'higher' or 'deeper' learning is and without an understanding of how assessment can promote such learning." Angelo says that we have gotten too focused on the "hows" of assessment—the particular techniques used. In a section of his article entitled "Changing Our Mental Models: Assessment as Culture Transformation," he makes the claim that "Assessment techniques are of little use unless and until local academic cultures value self-examination, reflection, and continuous improvement." The faculty development model described here attempts to accomplish those goals for participants through engaging them in peer review activities, the use of primary trait assessment to develop rubrics, the use of classroom assessment techniques, and finally the development of a course teaching portfolio. I first discuss the background of the course and the make-up of the group and then discuss each of the components of the class activities, closing with the benefits of such a faculty development activity.

Course Development and Composition

I developed the course called "Peer Mentoring and Support for Communications Faculty," offered for graduate-level credit through the continuing education arm of a local university, after having been involved in each of the faculty development activities in isolation. I had taken a course in peer review two different semesters and a course in constructing a teaching portfolio, all offered through the local university and our Teaching and Learning Center at Hawkeye. I had also taught a one-credit class for our faculty in the Classroom Assessment approach of Tom Angelo and K. Patricia Cross a few years earlier, in addition to having done a number of introductory workshops to the approach in faculty in-service sessions. Finally, I had done an in-service session on using primary trait assessment to construct and use rubrics; and we had brought one of the foremost experts on rubric use, Dr. Barbara Walvoord, to our campus for an all-day workshop. We had also held a literature discussion group the previous spring in which we met periodically to discuss a book by John Bean called *Engaging Ideas*, which ended up being one of the texts I used. (Three of the other participants in the class had participated in at least one of the other activities leading up to the development of this class as well.) While I had therefore experienced the value of each type of activity on its own to lead teachers to a deeper level of engagement in teaching and learning and offer them a means to improve their classroom efforts on an ongoing basis, I wanted to see how the various processes would work together and inform each other and therefore multiply the effects. Partly out of a selfish desire to build departmental unity and to create a comfort zone for myself in experimenting for the first time with the course, I decided to limit participation only to my communications colleagues.

We had seven people actually taking the class for credit, one auditing, and a few who would attend the discussion periodically just out of their own interest. Two of the regular attendees were male with the remaining six female; five were full-time instructors with a mix of veteran and newer faculty, and two were long-term adjunct faculty with one a relatively new composition adjunct. Such diversity within the participants afforded us opportunities to break down the rank differences among us and to bring newer faculty "into the fold" more quickly. I asked participants to select one course to focus their efforts on throughout the semester, so we had three subgroups of "Fundamentals of Oral Communications," "Composition I," and "Applied Writing," the last of which is a nontransfer class taken by technical students. In addition to being the "instructor of record" for the course, I participated fully in all the course activities and completed all the assignments required.

Course Activities

The selection of textbooks led to much of the success of the course for participants. They found the two primary texts, *Bean's Engaging Ideas* and Walvoord's *Effective Grading*, to be extremely accessible and practical. Bean's main focus is on how teachers of all disciplines can use writing activities in their classes to engage students in critical thinking and a deeper level of learning of the subject matter; his intended audience is therefore faculty in discipline areas other than communications. However, we as teachers of writing and speaking all found a wealth of materials in Bean that prompted deeper thinking about such issues as grading, construction of a syllabus to communicate well with students, the design of effective assignments, and so on. Walvoord's text too is written at least as much for faculty in other disciplines as it is for communications faculty. For each week's reading, course participants would write a reflective thought-piece in response, which we would then use to begin our discussions. One comment that came up over and over again throughout the semester was how valuable participants found the readings in prompting a re-thinking of their teaching of their selected class (as well as how much they appreciated the style and format in which the texts were written).

Peer review activities formed one of the centerpieces of the course and will therefore be described in some detail. We engaged in four types of peer review activities, modeling our approach and response forms after those outlined by Keig and Waggoner. The first peer review activity was an exchange of first-day course materials given to students, including the syllabus, schedule, assignment sheets for major assignments, etc. This served as an effective "warm-up" to break down any anxieties or insecurities people felt about "opening their classroom doors" to other faculty. Teaching is indeed one of the most private professions, with many of us never having opportunities to see our colleagues in action; therefore, some—especially newer or adjunct faculty—may feel initially reticient to open up in that way. By first sharing and discussing the first-day course documents that communicate to students and form their first impressions of the course, participants were able to break down some of that reserve and begin to experience the affirmation and genuine pleasure that comes from doing so. (Again, I was working with a relatively "known" and trusted group, and we still began with some ground rules about trust and support to discourage unduly harsh criticism or sharing beyond the group.)

In the course of the semester, participants did two actual classroom observations of other faculty within their subgroup. For each, a particularly valuable process outlined by Keig and Waggoner was followed. Rather than having visitors drop in and observe with no context in which to place what they were seeing, each person who would be observed completed a self-assessment worksheet planning for the day and then met with his/her "observer" beforehand to talk about what had been done in previous class periods leading up to the particular class session to be observed and to discuss their goals and plans for the class period as well as any particular aspect they wanted the observer to focus on. (This approach by Keig and Waggoner is far superior, I believe, to the formal evaluation process by supervisors that exists at my institution in which a "snapshot" of the semester is viewed in total isolation from all that has come before and will follow.) During the actual peer review sessions, then, observers have a form they use as a guide to follow in what to look for and comment on. Both the observer and the "observee" then fill out evaluation forms assessing what happened in the class session and meet in a post-observation session to discuss their perceptions.

In addition to exchanging course materials and actually watching each other teach, participants also exchanged their choice of either assignment sheets for a particular learning task or teacher evaluations of student work to look at how they dealt with products of student learning as an extension of teaching. For instance, those in the oral communications sub-group chose to watch a couple of videotaped student speeches together and grade them inidividually; their discussion then focused on the similarities and differences (and overall consistency of) their grading. Some of the writing instructors, on the other hand, exchanged a few sample student papers with their in-text comments and response sheets attached to look at how they were communicating with students to shape future drafts. Many also exchanged assignment sheets as a way to inquire into their effectiveness in communicating requirements and expectations to students; Bean has some helpful guide questions to use in evaluating assignment sheets.

The final peer review component was for each participant to videotape him/herself teaching and then to watch the tape as a means of self-evaluation. Surprisingly, a few course participants said they had never taped and watched themselves teaching and found it quite intimidating initially. They also reported, however, finding it quite valuable after getting over the initial shock of seeing and hearing themselves as their students do; many pledged to repeat the activity on their own periodically because they had found it so illuminating. (Samples of the response forms will be provided during the session at the Annual Meeting.)

In addition to peer review, participants also had to use Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) (using the Angelo and Cross approach) at least three times during the semester, including either the "One-Minute Paper" or the "Muddiest Point" early on, the "Mid-Semester Feedback Form" near the halfway point, and then a third "CAT" of their choice in the last half of the term. They then prepared a summary of the results of each CAT use, what insights it prompted, and what they did with the results. A similar approach was employed with the rubrics requirement: participants wrote a rubric using the process of primary trait analysis, used it in their class, and then prepared a summary of what the results were. (Samples of the Classroom Assessment techniques and rubrics will be given during the session at the Annual Meeting.)

The last major requirement was the construction of a course teaching portfolio, much of which was a re-packaging of work done as we went along in the class. This included some of the reflective writings they had done in response to the readings, the peer review activities, the use of rubrics, and the use of classroom assessment, in addition to other reflective thought pieces on issues such as their approach to and philosophy of grading, the results of their taking a Teaching Goals Inventory, and a piece on their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to the research-based "7 Principles for Effective Practice in Teaching and Learning." In a final "Course Summary" section, they then identified some of the benefits gained from the process of completing the course and described the issues and challenges to be worked on in the future in their teaching of the selected class. Throughout the course and the construction of the teaching portfolio, emphasis was placed on not only acknowledging strengths and affirming the positive but also on recognizing need areas and setting goals for future improvement.

Conclusion

Overall, the course lived up to its name of providing mentoring and support to each other as colleagues in our ongoing attempts to think more deeply and critically about what happens on a daily basis within our classrooms. The class seems to me the essence of what Edgerton calls "a culture of professional inquiry about good teaching," what Schon means by "reflective practice," what Boyer calls for in talking about "the scholarship of teaching," and what Shulman refers to as "the vision of the knowing that informs good teaching." Angelo, too, in his article in the *AAHE Bulletin* calls for the need "to develop a learning community-like culture"; this particular course met those goals (and many more) for the participants involved. If we truly believe that assessment should be first and foremost about improvement and only secondarily about accountability and if we believe that the essence of assessment is to promote in-depth faculty examination and discussion of the challenges of the teaching and learning process, this course approach has promise. It weaves together a number of activities with value in terms of self-reflection and improvement when carried out in isolation; however, by combining them they become even more powerful and effective in creating the true spirit of assessment and self-improvement for faculty.

References

Angelo, Thomas A., and K. Patricia Cross. 1993. *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Angelo, Thomas A. 1999. Doing assessment as if learning matters most. *AAHE Bulletin* 51(9):3-6.

Bean, John C. 1996. *Engaging ideas: The professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, Arthur W., and Zelda F. Gamson. 1998. Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate rducation. *In teaching and learning in the college classroom*, ed. Kenneth A. Feldman and Michael B. Paulsen. Needham Heights, Mass.: Simon and Schuster.

Edgerton, Russell, Patricia Hutchings, and Kathleen Quinlan. 1991. *The teaching portfolio: Capturing the scholarship in teaching.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

Hutchings, Pat. 1996. *Making teaching community property: A menu for peer collaboration and peer review.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

Keig, Larry, and Michael D. Waggoner. 1994. *Collaborative peer review: The role of faculty in improving college teaching.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Schon, Donald. 1983. *The reflective practitioner.* New York: Basic Books.

Walvoord, Barbara E., and Virginia Johnson Anderson. 1998. *Effective grading: A tool for learning and assessment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Karla Brown is Communications Instructor/Assessment Chair at Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo, Iowa.

Managing Adjunct Faculty: A Model for Classroom Success

Beth Newton
Bernie Yevin

The use of adjunct faculty to teach college courses is a growing phenomenon at campuses across America. The percentage of part-time to full-time faculty has almost doubled from 22% in 1970 to well over 40% today. With state legislatures demanding cost-effectiveness and accountability at public institutions, and increasing financial demands on all but a very few private colleges with large endowments, the role of the adjunct will continue to make a formidable impact on higher education. With this occurring, one administrative question quickly arises: "How do colleges and universities ensure a quality educational experience for their students while maintaining academic integrity with increasing dependence on adjunct faculty teaching on a course-by-course, semester-by-semester basis?"

The Problem

As with any administrator faced with the responsibility of managing adjunct faculty, several problems quickly arise:

- How can I recruit competent adjunct faculty?
- How do I develop this faculty into good teachers?
- How do I retain a consistent pool of adjunct faculty who are not only qualified in their subject areas, but are also good teachers?

The Typical Scenario

The typical scenario to recruiting adjunct faculty is either to ask if someone knows someone who is interested in teaching or, if time permits, run an ad in the local paper. Either way will generate responses, and the "best looking" person is usually chosen and put into the classroom to teach the course that has "staff" printed in the faculty column. Granted, this solves the immediate problem, but unfortunately it is only a short-term solution. It does not address the fundamental issues of:

- building academic integrity within the adjunct faculty pool
- conveying performance standards to adjunct faculty
- identifying superior adjunct faculty
- retaining and rewarding superior adjunct faculty

These issues clearly form the nucleus of factors that constitute program quality and academic integrity.

The authors addressed these issues, and in a comparative review of the process each uses in managing adjunct faculty, they identified seven common steps. These seven steps are applicable to managing adjunct faculty in any educational format or delivery system and at any type of educational institution.

The Seven Step Fontbonne College Model

The Seven Step Fontbonne College Model presents a comprehensive approach to managing adjunct faculty that is both logical and can be readily implemented from the department to the institutional level. Its focus is to maintain academic integrity through systematic quality control of adjunct faculty. This approach has been successfully in place for more than five years.

☐ **The Seven Step Model:**

1. Recruiting qualified prospective adjunct faculty
2. Evaluating prospective adjunct faculty
3. Orienting, training, and mentoring adjunct faculty
4. Evaluating classroom performance
5. The reappointment decision
6. Adjunct compensation and reward
7. Ongoing faculty development

The authors believe that if any of these steps is implemented, even to a cursory level, a move will be initiated in the right direction to effect a noticeable change in the quality of the adjunct faculty pool and the basis of a systematic management of adjunct faculty will be initiated.

Beth Newton is Chair, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, Missouri.

Bernie Yevin is Director of Faculty for the OPTIONS Program at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, Missouri.

Preparing High Quality Faculty for Learning Focused Institutions in the 21st Century

Howard G. Sam Bass
Kenneth Collins

Introduction

During the fall of 1999, Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, began to review the Master of Science in College Teaching program offered by the institution. The student enrollment in this program was made up of individuals who were seeking employment in or were employed as faculty and student services professionals in the more than 100 two-year college campuses located in the four state region served by the institution. The initial environmental scan revealed a need to review the mission and purpose of the program because it appeared that what these students needed to know and be able to do once they graduated and entered the workplace had changed considerably since the last review of the College Teaching curriculum. In order to determine exactly what community and technical colleges expected new faculty to know and be able to do, the university asked the National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges executive board to act as an advisory committee for this program. The National Alliance agreed to advise the program and ask the member institutions to provide input and advice.

Determining the Issues

Recent reports from sources across the academy indicate that higher education institutions may face shortages in faculty prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges Executive Board chose to focus on issues faced by member institutions as well as two-year colleges in the region served by Northeastern State University. The four state region served by NSU includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Survey data were collected during January and February of 2000. The survey issues focused on topics found in the higher education research literature that indicated what newly hired faculty should know and be able to do upon their arrival to begin faculty responsibilities at a learning focused college. The survey also asked for general information regarding faculty–age demographics, numbers of full time faculty, and how faculty development was accomplished.

The Issues

A review of the professional research literature revealed that skills required by new faculty in higher education may have changed radically over the past five years. Research also revealed that human resource needs could increase dramatically due to high retirement levels coupled with higher enrollments. The survey was designed to respond to the following issues:

- The urgency of what appears to be a looming human resources deficit at colleges since one-third of all faculty in higher education have reached the of age of 55 or more and may already be eligible for retirement. These data obtained from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA also confirm that faculty under the age of 45 has declined from 41% of the faculty population in 1989 to only 34% of the professoriate in 1999.

- There is a growing need for more faculty because some states will see enrollment increases in higher education at the 20% level or above during the first decade of the twenty-first century. North Carolina, California, Nevada, Washington, and Texas are preparing for a new tidal wave of enrollments during the first decade of the 21st century. A number of articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* point to the fact that increased college enrollments and the need for infrastructure improvements on college campuses could absorb most of the new resources from robust economies generated during the decade.
- The increasing role of faculty in workforce development and training and the lack of faculty preparation for this type of instruction appears to be generating problems for learning focused institutions. Faculty not familiar with performance based instruction or the tools associated with this type of curriculum are facing increased anxiety because they feel a lack of control over the curriculum content.
- The need to construct results-focused curricula is demanded by all the stakeholders in higher education, especially state legislatures and state boards of higher education. Kay McClenney, vice president of the Education Commission of the States, in an August 1998 issue of *Leadership Abstracts*, said the inescapable reality is that policy makers and the public are through signing blank checks for higher education. Institutions are expected to perform, document performance, and be accountable for producing return on taxpayer and student investment. South Carolina is leading the way in what is referred to as "Performance Based Funding." South Carolina law requires that every state dollar given to a public college be tied to performance as of July 1999. The law laid out 37 criteria to be monitored, giving each criterion equal weight. South Carolina schools can no longer receive subsidies based on enrollment. Instead, institutions must prove themselves or risk being starved of state funds. The South Carolina model is being used by many legislators from other states as they try to craft similar legislation for their state colleges and universities.
- The demand for institutional accountability through assessment and classroom research strategies that report what students actually know and can do. We are all familiar with North Central Association's focus on the assessment of student academic achievement. Since 1989 NCA has required that institutions be accountable for student learning through quality improvement feedback loops based on student performance in the programs offered by member institutions.
- The increased use of sophisticated technology in teaching and learning, coupled with faculty resistance (especially senior faculty) or lack of motivation, to include technology in teaching. The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) released its *Overview of the 1998-1999 Faculty Norms* in August of 1999. The report notes that knowledge of and use of technology by faculty is one of the more stressful aspects of the professorial role. Faculty over age 55 used information technology less than faculty aged 44 or younger in every category analyzed by HERI. The study also revealed that even though older faculty were less likely than younger faculty to use computers, information technology causes them even more stress.
- The *performance reporting for funding* based on institutional effectiveness through the assessment of student academic achievement. Most federal funding now requires reports on what students know and are able to do as a result of an education program or training program. Funding under the new Carl Perkins guidelines and the Workforce Investment act (PL 105-220) requires student performance reports in order to remain eligible for funding and qualify as a certified training provider.

The research literature indicates that skills required for new faculty are quite different from skills needed by faculty entering the professoriate a few short years ago. It is also evident that we will need more faculty because of the burgeoning enrollments expected over the next ten years. The literature also reveals that the use of technology in teaching will increase because states will not be able to build brick and mortar infrastructure. And this increased use of technology will require faculty to have new skills that are currently in short supply. These issues have a direct bearing on how a learning focused institution will meet the demands of the new century. The results of this study and a thorough analysis of the data should provide a good platform from which to build a student learning focused Master of Science in College Teaching at Northeastern State University. A summary of our findings and a set of program recommendations will be available at our presentation. Individuals interested in a roundtable discussion regarding faculty preparation for teaching in two year colleges will be given the opportunity to discuss these issues at a time and location announced at the presentation. A copy of the survey instrument is attached.

Howard G. Sam Bass is Dean of Teaching and Learning and Director of the Faculty Development Center at Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

Kenneth Collins is Dean of the Graduate College at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Appendix

Preparing New Faculty For the 21st Century

December 1999

This survey asks you to determine an age demographic for your **teaching** faculty. We need this information in order to estimate the size of the expected retirement cohorts during the first decade of the 21st century. A recent report by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA indicates that 32.8% of the faculty at the 1800 colleges and universities surveyed are already retirement eligible. This regional study is focused on two-year colleges in the states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. We are attempting to determine if the HERI study is consistent with colleges in our four state region. We are also interested in what the new professoriate is expected to know and be able to do as they begin teaching in your colleges. Additionally, universities that prepare the future community/technical college professoriate wish to ensure that they will be equipping their graduates academically and intellectually to meet your need. To this end, **The National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges** is supporting **Northeastern State University** by serving as the advisory committee to the NSU Master of Science in College Teaching program. This program prepares students not only in their chosen discipline, but also in skills needed to be an effective, learning oriented faculty member. We know that technology has changed the way we plan our teaching, when we teach, the methods we use in delivering instruction, the way we interact with students, and, who our students are and where they are located. The National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges, Northeastern State University and my office staff thank you for assisting us in this matter.

Please return mail this survey to me by February 14, 2000

Section One: General Information

1. What is your primary position?
    - President or CEO ___
    - Academic Vice-President ___
    - Provost ___
    - Academic Dean ___
    - Human Resources Director ___
    - Other Administrator ___

2. What type of organization is your institution?
    - Comprehensive Community College ___
    - Community/Technical College ___
    - Junior College ___
    - Technical College ___
    - Public ___
    - Private Non- Profit ___
    - Private For-Profit ___

Section Two: Faculty, Institutional, and Search Process Data.

1. We need to know the total number of full-time faculty at your college — 1. ____________
2. We need to know the number, by age group, of your faculty based on their last birthday — 2. 55 or older ________ 50 - 54 ________ 45 - 49 ________
3. What is the number of FTE students at your college — 3. ____________
4. What is the size of your operating budget rounded to the nearest $100,000 — 4. $ ____________
5. How much does your college spend or have budgeted specifically for faculty development in the current fiscal year — 5. $ ____________

6. Does your college have a Faculty Development Center or other resources (human, physical, fiscal) dedicated specifically to the improvement of faculty teaching and student learning	6.	Yes ________________ No ________________

When hiring new faculty how frequently do you		Rarely………… 1	2	3	4	……Often 5
7. Recruit from the ranks of your adjunct or part-time faculty	7.	○	○	○	○	○
8. Recruit using local searches from professionals who qualify to teach at our college, and may be currently employed in local public schools or private business or industry	8.	○	○	○	○	○
9. Recruit new and recent graduates from university programs	9.	○	○	○	○	○
10. Recruit using statewide or regional searches for faculty who may be employed at other colleges	10.	○	○	○	○	○
11. We use national searches and attempt to bring the brightest and best faculty with substantive reputation	11.	○	○	○	○	○

Section Three: Curriculum Development

When hiring new faculty please indicate the importance you accord to each of the following **curriculum development** skills		1 = Not Important At All 1	2	3	4	5 = Very Important 5
1. Write measurable outcomes and competencies at the course and program level	1.	○	○	○	○	○
2. Establish performance criteria for course and program outcomes and competencies	2.	○	○	○	○	○
3. Develop and assess learning objectives that support course and program outcomes and competencies	3.	○	○	○	○	○
4. Integrate and assess academic (vocational or technical) and intellectual (general education) skills within the program curriculum	4.	○	○	○	○	○
5. Design and assess learning activities that support learning objectives, course competencies, and program outcomes	5.	○	○	○	○	○
6. Conduct classroom assessment that focuses its primary attention on observing and improving student learning	6.	○	○	○	○	○

Section Four: Teaching - Technology

When hiring new faculty to what extent do you emphasize knowing how to use		1 = Not Important At All 1	2	3	4	5 = Very Important 5
1. Multi-media which would include presentation graphics in teaching as well as student assignments	1.	○	○	○	○	○
2. The internet in classroom discussions and homework assignments	2.	○	○	○	○	○
3. Electronic media such as CD/ROM technology to enhance course content	3.	○	○	○	○	○
4. Virtual laboratory experiments or computer modeling to support classroom or laboratory learning	4.	○	○	○	○	○
5. The internet to deliver courses	5.	○	○	○	○	○

Section Five: Student Learning, Diversity, and Motivation

When hiring new faculty what importance do you place on their

1 = Not Important At All — 5 = Very Important

		1	2	3	4	5
1. Ability to make academic accommodations for students with disabilities	1.	○	○	○	○	○
2. Ability to accommodate academically diverse students in the same classroom	2.	○	○	○	○	○
3. Ability to create collaborative learning, group work, and study team projects in order to engage learners in their courses	3.	○	○	○	○	○
4. Ability to diversify instruction to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences	4.	○	○	○	○	○
5. Ability to incorporate strategies and instructional behaviors that motivate students to learn by improving student self-concept	5.	○	○	○	○	○
6. Ability to incorporate instructional strategies that lower test anxiety and its effect	6.	○	○	○	○	○
7. Ability to raise task value, that is, the attainment, the interest, and the utility of course content, through innovative learning activities germane to the students major	7.	○	○	○	○	○
8. Ability to present culturally diverse views of the content of the courses one may be teaching	8.	○	○	○	○	○

Section Six: General Requirements

Please rank the importance of the following skills and knowledge for a new faculty member at your institution

1 = Not Important At All — 5 = Very Important

		1	2	3	4	5
1. They should be well equipped to conduct classroom and discipline related research	1.	○	○	○	○	○
2. They should have a broad knowledge of the history of higher education in America	2.	○	○	○	○	○
3. A faculty member should be knowledgeable about the philosophy of higher education associated with two-year learning institutions	3.	○	○	○	○	○
4. They should be well informed about the current role of student services in the context of the community college	4.	○	○	○	○	○

Section Seven: General Issues

A new faculty member should

1 = Not Important At All — 5 = Very Important

		1	2	3	4	5
1. Be able to serve as an effective student advisor during his/her first year of service	1.	○	○	○	○	○
2. Have served in an internship in higher education before assuming their first teaching position in higher education	2.	○	○	○	○	○

Thank you for completing this survey.
We will send you a summary of the results of this survey in April of 2000.

Cordially,

H.G. Sam Bass Ph.D.
Principal Researcher

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 8

Quest for Quality: Institutional Integrity

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Developing an Institutional Statement of Ethics

Janice Elias
Denise Da Ros

In 1997 the Academic Senate of Youngstown State University unanimously approved the Youngstown State University Statement of Ethics. The impetus for creating the statement was discussion of the meaning of NCA Criterion Five, "The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships." The accreditation self-study process prompted some members of the University community to ask: Do we share common ethical values? What are they, and where are they stated? The chair of the Academic Senate, who also served as co-chair of the Criterion Five Self-Study Committee, established an ad hoc Academic Senate committee to develop an institutional code of ethics. The process of writing and approving a statement, that as the chair of the senate suggested "would be so reasonable that no one could argue," took less than six months. The process used may be a model for other universities.

Committee Composition and Charge

Two questions must be considered initially and simultaneously: Who should draft the statement, and to whom does the statement apply? The composition of the committee is a serious consideration because people support that which they help to build. The initial charge was to draft a statement for the University. However, Youngstown State University's Academic Senate does not represent all constituencies. It includes faculty, administrators, and students, but not staff. A faculty member from each of the six colleges, an administrator, and a graduate student were asked to serve on the committee. Because neither the committee nor the senate included representation from staff, the statement applies to "We, the faculty and administrative members of the Youngstown State University community. . . ." Although students were represented, we determined that the statement describes our obligations to students rather than the ethical obligations of students. If the goal is to have an institutional statement that applies to all employees, it would be important to make sure all groups are represented in some way in the development.

Procedure

The chair, a faculty member from the Department of Philosophy and co-director of the James Dale Ethics Center, was uniquely qualified for this particular assignment. The smooth process was to a great extent attributed to the chair, who proposed a manageable time line, gathered codes of ethics from various disciplines, and led an initial committee discussion of the article "Ethical Principles for College and University Teaching" (Murray, Gillese, Lennon, Mercer, and Robinson, 1996).

The sharing of ethical statements from various disciplines such as early childhood education, family and consumer sciences, and psychology prompted our thinking about various ethical issues. One important background source for such a committee is the American Association of University Professors "Statement on Professional Ethics," as well as the entire section on professional ethics in the AAUP's publication of Policy Documents and Reports (1995).

Dilemmas that universities face at one time or another were reviewed and served as a reminder of the effects of unethical behavior. Through group discussion the committee identified concepts that we wished to include in the statement. The concepts were placed in logically related groups, and four fundamental values emerged: integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility. Subcommittees were established as self-selected writing teams to draft language for the four areas as well as a preamble and a concluding statement. Drafts were then reviewed and revised after group discussion and agreement on several guidelines:

- use first person
- avoid "should"
- use affirmative statements rather than "thou shall nots"

As we moved to the final draft stage, the chair asked questions, obtained consensus, and merged the disparate writing styles of the subcommittee drafts into a coherent statement. The committee solicited feedback on the draft from several individuals, including the Council of Deans, and then made additional revisions. The draft was distributed to all members of the Academic Senate and written comments solicited before the final version was proposed for adoption.

Adoption

One important question is, Who has the power to authorize a statement for the University? The Academic Senate unanimously adopted the Statement in June. We felt, however, that the Senate did not have the authority to adopt a statement for the entire University. The statement was submitted to the university's Board of Trustees and that body accepted the statement and approved a resolution that "commends the members of the Academic Senate for the initiative and persistence they demonstrated in the development and approval of the Statement of Ethical Principles." The code was then included as the first section of the University Guidebook that contains all Board of Trustees policies and procedures. The statement appears as an appendix to this paper.

Content

Professional codes of ethics describe one's obligations to others: to clients, to the employer, to colleagues, and to society at large, and may be organized according to that framework (Johnson as cited in Oz, 1994). Although we chose to organize our statement around four values instead, obligations to all four groups are included. Some examples are shown in the following table. Redundancy can be avoided by stating general principles that can be applied to more than one of the groups. For example, one of the principles in our statement "Power is not to be used in an abusive manner" could refer to the relationship between a professor and student or between a supervisor and employee.

Obligations	**Principle**
To society	"...to provide important leadership and enlightenment to the communities in which we live."
To clients (students)	"...classroom performance will be assessed in ways that are valid, open, fair, and consistent."
To colleagues	"...we recognize the responsibility of demonstrating that we value the dignity of our colleagues in such a way as to preserve their academic, professional, and personal reputation."
To the employer	"Members agree to work for the good of the institution as a whole and will endeavor to abide by stated university policies and regulations that pertain to its well-being."

Uses of an Institutional Ethics Statement

Johnson and Snapper (as cited in Oz, 1994) identified five objectives of professional codes of ethics: inspiration, sensitivity, discipline, advice, and awareness. The development, approval, dissemination, and discussion of the statement have developed our sensitivity to the moral aspects of our jobs. The preamble of the statement says that it "is intended to guide faculty and administrators as we work together" and it does provide specific advice. For example, it suggests that "a student is usually listed as the principal author of any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on his or her dissertation or thesis." Among students and the public the statement creates awareness of what they should expect of us. Our statement does not have provisions for discipline as many professional codes do. Generally there are other mechanisms for handling severe breaches of ethical conduct on university campuses. However, it has been used in counseling employees with the hope of inspiring them to more constructive behavior.

Conclusion

The development of an institutional code of ethics is one way that an institution can clearly state its intention to demonstrate integrity in its practices and relationships. As expressed in our ethics statement, the actual demonstration of that integrity "requires not only the expression of these ideals but also a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically."

References

American Association of University Professors (AAUP). 1995. *Policy documents and reports.* Washington, D.C.: AAUP.

Murray, H., E. Gillese, M. Lennon, P. Mercer, and M. Robinson. December 1996. Ethical principles for college and university teaching. *AAHE Bulletin.*

Oz, E. 1994. *Ethics for the information age.* William C. Brown Communications, Inc.

Janice Elias is Assistant Provost for Planning at Youngstown State University in Ohio.

Denise Da Ros is Associate Professor at Youngstown State University in Ohio.

Appendix

Youngstown State University
Statement of Ethics

Preamble

We, the faculty and administrative members of the Youngstown State University community, strive to create an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, university, and public service. The YSU Statement of Ethics is intended to guide faculty and administrators as we work together to fulfill this mission. These core principles describe appropriate relations among members of the University community, the constituencies we serve, and the larger society in which we work.

This Statement serves as a guide of conduct through articulating the principles that underlie our behavior. This Statement assists individuals in resolving ethical dilemmas by describing some of the rights, responsibilities, freedoms, and constraints upon our actions. As a community, we recognize the difficulty in discerning the resolution of these dilemmas and their ensuing conflicts. For example, freedom of expression and academic freedom carry with them the responsibility to respect the worth and dignity of each human being. Likewise, the unfettered search for and dissemination of knowledge requires honesty both in its pursuit and communication. Moreover, professional autonomy, a hallmark of higher education, is preserved when it is exercised within the context of the principles this Statement supports.

Although interpretation of the Statement's principles is mediated by personal values, culture, and experiences, the University community affirms the fundamental values of integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility that this Statement articulates. Achieving a community which practices these ideals requires not only the expression of these ideals but also a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically.

Integrity

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, uphold our commitment to cultivate integrity in all areas of University life. In so doing, we (faculty and administrators) adhere to the principle of moral inclusion, i.e., rules of morality, honesty, and fair play are applied to all regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, as members of the University community, we become aware of our own moral perspectives as we engage in the process of values clarification. We do so in order to eliminate biases that would hinder the application of the principle of moral inclusion. Members of the University community foster integrity through educational efforts in campus newspapers, seminars, lectures, and other programs.

There are three key areas in which integrity plays a major role. First, the performance of duties and job responsibilities requires integrity insofar as these encompass the resolution of conflicts of interests among students and employees of the University. Next, interactions within the YSU community require integrity insofar as these interactions encompass the proper use of power. Power is not to be used in an abusive manner. Thirdly, in the distribution of resources within our community, integrity is present insofar as distributions are equitable and fair.

Furthermore, a commitment to integrity requires that publication credit accurately reflect the relative and proportional professional contributions of the individuals involved. When major contributions of a professional character are made by several persons to a common project, these are recognized by joint authorship. In valuing integrity, we also recognize a student's authorship of his or her written work, and that a student is usually listed as the principal author of any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on his or her dissertation or thesis.

Competence

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, uphold our commitment to maintain competence and expertise in our chosen fields. In so doing, we engage in professional activities that will both increase and maintain our awareness of current information and our maintenance of performance standards. Furthermore, we recognize our limitations and seek appropriate guidance and education to broaden them. In recognizing the need to further our competence, we actively pursue excellence in our areas of expertise and their related fields.

Furthermore, we recognize that we are to maintain a level of education, training, and research. In doing so, we further our goals of effective teaching, supervision, and participation in the activities required of us in our individual academic environments.

Finally, we recognize that a commitment to competence requires an obligation to be accountable for our individual actions and judgments. We uphold professional standards of conduct. If our performance or conduct is impaired and our expected duties cannot be fulfilled, then reasonable steps must be taken to prevent harm to those we encounter.

Respect

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, adhere to a universal, comprehensive respect for persons. Implicit in such respect is a valuing of what it is to be human so as to preserve and encourage the rights of all individuals. Although we possess certain rights, our rights do not exist in a vacuum; they are activated in a web of relationships such that there is a reciprocity between rights and the conditions that make them possible. This reciprocity leaves us necessarily respectful of one another.

Through a respect for persons, we guarantee some basic rights and equal access to these rights as the respective benefits of the many facets of our environment. We all have a right to be heard. Included in this right is the requirement to work towards an environment that not only allows people to be heard but also empowers them to the point of making themselves heard. This includes the duty of not silencing others through discriminatory or prejudicial behavior, as well as the duty of seeking to eradicate that behavior which drowns out the voices that are typically heard less often. We all have a right to be safe. Included in this right is the freedom from exploitative power relationships. Within any community there are power differentials, but when such distinctions are enacted with an underlying respect for persons and their role in the community, destructive effects are minimized. Finally, we all have a right to be valued. Included in this right is the requirement to value others, such that we respect their privacy and confidentiality.

Inevitable in a framework of rights are the ensuing conflicts that arise within any community when desires are at cross-purposes. Yet, when such conflicts arise against the backdrop of a commitment to respect, these conflicts are resolved in such a manner as to allow for a positive and productive future after conflict. As members of the YSU community, we support this futureæa future based on mutual respect.

Responsibility

As educational leaders, faculty and administrative members of our University community must demonstrate responsibility to our students, colleagues, institution, discipline, and community.

Within the YSU community, we recognize the responsibility to value all students. In order to contribute to the ongoing development of students, we will value their opinions, time, and academic contributions. Within this framework of responsibility, classroom performance will be assessed in ways that are valid, open, fair, and consistent. As members of the YSU community, we recognize the responsibility of demonstrating that we value the dignity of our colleagues in such a way as to preserve their academic, professional, and personal reputation. Members of our community are to work cooperatively with colleagues to foster professional development.

Members of the institution are to be aware of and value the educational goals, policies, and standards of the institution. Members agree to work for the good of the institution as a whole and will endeavor to abide by stated University policies and regulations that pertain to its well-being. Neither outside commitments nor personal gain will be allowed to come into conflict with this responsibility.

Members of the YSU community shall maintain a high regard for and a continued involvement in the discipline in which they are involved. This requires gaining and maintaining a high level of valid knowledge that ensures that professional expertise is accurate, current, representative, appropriate, and without personal bias. Furthermore, we will take steps to understand alternative ways of presenting knowledge and skills. Finally, we shall take steps to foster an environment that develops these practices.

As members of the YSU community, we will represent the University to the community for the mutual enrichment of both. We recognize that we have the responsibility to share knowledge and skills and to provide important leadership and enlightenment to the communities in which we live. This responsibility will manifest itself in terms of community and public service, often reflecting, but not limited to, our areas of expertise.

Conclusion

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, make this commitment to the values of integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility. In so doing, we recognize this is a fundamental, though not an exhaustive, list of ethical principles that can serve as a framework for our relationships to one another within the context of continuous moral development.

Criterion Five as an Organizing Framework

Suzanne Selig
Lucinda Pfalzer

Starting Early and Creating a Forum for Broad-Based Involvement

In September 1997, approximately two years prior to the University of Michigan-Flint NCA self-study due date, a group of fifteen administrators and faculty was brought together to develop an approach to write the self-study chapter on Criterion Five. Participants were selected on the basis of their respective areas of responsibility to ensure that the group was knowledgeable about the broadest range of university policies and procedures with some members representing more than one area. The initial membership evolved over the year due to several staff reassignments and the later identification of some gaps in representation, e.g., the Public Television Station. The areas represented are shown in Table One:

Table One

University Areas Represented
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs*
Business Operations
College of Arts and Sciences
Educational Opportunities Initiatives/Affirmative Action
Environment, Health and Safety
Extension and Continuing Education
Facilities Management
Faculty Council
Frances Willson Thompson Library*
Honors Program
Human Resources
Human Subjects Committee*
Information Technology Services
Office of Development
Office of Graduate Programs and Research
Office of Student Life
Office of Alumni and University Relations
Public Safety Department
Project for Urban and Regional Affairs
Recreational Services
School of Health Professions and Studies*
School of Management
Staff Council
Student Government
UM-Flint Code and Nominating Committee
Unit Academic Standards Committees
University Outreach
Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management
WFUM-TV 28

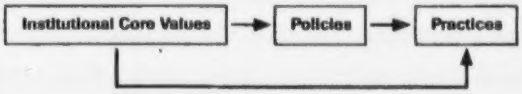
*representatives also served on NCA Self-Study Steering Committee

Defining and Identifying the Foundation: Institutional Integrity, Core Values, Policies, and Procedures

Institutional Integrity

The first question that the workgroup addressed was: What does UM-Flint mean by "integrity?" The group agreed that "Institutional Integrity" is demonstrated 1) if the University's written policies and other patterns of evidence reflect its core institutional values; and 2) if practices are consistent with these policies and procedures and UM-Flint's core values and policies as shown:

Institutional Integrity



Inventory of Policies and Procedures

The workgroup's first activity was to compile a complete inventory of UM-Flint policies and written procedures. Most of these policies had at least one workgroup member with responsibility for their oversight. Copies of these policies were placed in our NCA Resource Room. We then broadened our definition of institutional integrity to include consistency with "practice." This step required that we develop a mechanism to assess the relationship between policy and practice. To address this, the workgroup members were assigned to pairs, consisting of one person from within the unit and one outside the unit to facilitate more in-depth discussion of the policies across units. These subgroups were asked to examine these policies and procedures and grade them as follows:

"A" Policy is consistent with practice, no need to change

"B" Policy has been revised, is now consistent with practice

"C" Policy still requires change, and the plan for revision of the policy is…

During the small group process, the subgroups identified another category, "D," wherein a common practice was not codified at the time. The common practice was either being, or needed to be, codified into a written procedure.

This additional activity demonstrated the dynamic relationship between policies and practices. It was evident that our written policies need to be monitored to ensure their accurate reflection of changes in practices. This activity also had some unanticipated benefits. Workgroup members reported to the larger group that they had gained a heightened respect and understanding of the magnitude of responsibilities shouldered by their colleagues across the university. Examples of policies that were graded as A, B, or C are shown here:

Table Two – Examples of Policies with A, B, or C*

Area	Policy	Grade
College of Arts and Sciences	• Policies of Academic Standards Committee	A
University and Alumni Relations	• Ethical Code of the American Marketing Association	A
Department of Public Safety	• Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Handbook	A
Student Services and Enrollment Management	• Students Rights Policy • Admissions Policies	B
School of Health Professions and Studies	• Appeal Policy for Instructional Staff	C
Environmental Health and Safety	• Emergency Response Plan	D

*C requires plan for addressing deficiency

Defining Core Values

Another major task was to define UM-Flint's "Core Institutional Values." No previous effort had been undertaken to develop an explicit set of "core values" for UM-Flint. Therefore, many workgroup meetings were devoted to a discussion of our core values. Previous efforts based at the unit level, such as Human Resources, were offered as a model, but failed to achieve the endorsement of this broadly constituted group. A subgroup was formed to draft a preliminary set of core values to flow from the Mission Statement. This draft provided a starting point, but was still unable to achieve consensus. Another subgroup turned to the products of the 1995 Academic Planning Committee, which had been created to "refine the University's Mission Statement and address seven planning clusters: academic quality, collaboration, academic programs, minority attainment, community outreach, technology, and student support."

The efforts of the Academic Planning Committee had involved extensive data gathering related to the clusters and included numerous campus open-meetings with students, staff, faculty, administrators, community leaders, alumni, several Regents of the University of Michigan, and the University of Michigan President. Input as to UM-Flint's strengths and unique characteristics had been obtained. This process occurred over a 12-month period using focus groups, survey instruments, and individual interviews. The revised UM-Flint Mission Statement and 1995 Academic

Plan are the products of this extensive effort. An analysis of these documents revealed that our core values were actually implicitly grounded in these products. We were able to utilize this previous effort (which had obtained university-wide endorsement) along with our own work to develop a set of 10 Core Values:

Table Three

Core Institutional Values
Honesty and Integrity
Equitable Treatment and Access
Student-Centered Focus
Academic Excellence
Responsive Campus Climate
Academic Freedom
Responsible Decision-Making
Responsiveness and Outreach to the Community
Respect for Human and Cultural Diversity
Citizenship and Service

We then refocused our examination of policies in the context of core values, e.g., Do our institutional policies reflect our core values? And, subsequently, Do our practices (and programs) reflect both core values and policies? To address these questions, the inventory of written policies and practices was further categorized into a matrix by the underlying core value of the policies. Recognizing the need to limit the group's written product, we looked at the inventory of policies (a document of more than 40 pages), and selected those with the broadest impact on our students, and our other constituent groups (faculty, staff, community). For this subset of policies, the group uncovered another layer of "evidence" of institutional integrity, i.e., what data exist to indicate that our policies are perceived as effective by UM-Flint's constituent groups. To seek answers to this question, various sources of institutional data were examined. Some of these data sources are ongoing institutional surveys conducted at regular intervals, while others were initiated specifically to gather data for the NCA self-study, e.g., focus groups and opinion surveys.

NCA Criterion Five workgroup members were assigned to mixed pairs (an academic area and a non-academic area i.e., University Outreach and the College of Arts and Sciences) and requested to provide a brief description of the policies within their respective areas of responsibility, discuss how they reflect core values, and identify data sources and specific items that might relate to these policies and practices.

Table Four

Selected List of Ongoing Institutional Data Sources
Student Satisfaction Inventory
Graduation Surveys
Freshman Surveys
Alumni Surveys

A list of selected policies and practices by core value and specific data item(s) related to these from the Self-Study Opinion Survey is presented in Table Five. The final step for this workgroup was to analyze the multiple sources of institutional data to assess how effectively our "patterns of evidence" were ensuring that our practices reflected our core values.

The Organizing Framework

The framework we developed informed our self-study process beyond that required to address Criterion Five. We recognized that we had no explicit set of core values. Intense, and sometimes difficult, discussion yielded a widely accepted set of core values (hidden within our recently adopted Mission Statement). Our statement of core values gave us another mechanism to assess our institutional policies and practices. Do they reflect our core values?

Prior to the self-study process, no explicit statement of institutional purposes existed. These were derived from the Mission Statement and the Academic Plan and were discussed in light of the core values. The Criterion Five framework was useful in that it directed the self-study process to look at the relationship between core values and institutional mission and purposes; all of which are manifested in our policies, procedures, and programs.

The framework also informed the discussion of Criterion Two relative to the organization of institutional resources. The organizational structure was assessed in terms of its reflection of the core values and the institutional purposes. The value of "student-centered focus" for example, is reflected in a reorganized area called "Student Services and Enrollment Management." The application of this framework also identified some areas where more attention might be warranted: Is a separation of Budget Administration and Institutional (data) Analysis reflective of "responsible decision-making?"

Table Five
UM-Flint: Selected Core Values, Policies and Related Data Items*

Core Value	Policies (Patterns of Evidence)	Selected Data Items from *Self-Study Opinion Survey*
Equitable Treatment and Access	• UM-Flint Undergraduate Admissions Policy • UM-Flint Accessibility Services Handbook • Academic Unit Student Grievance Policies • Purchasing Services and Partners in Procurement • Fee Appeals and Fee Committee • Recreation Center's Behavior Policy • EOE?	• Clearly stated procedures for annual evaluation of my performance • Clearly stated personnel policies • Unbiased personnel policies • Clearly stated student disciplinary procedures • Clearly stated faculty grievance procedures • Clearly stated faculty disciplinary procedures • Employment opportunities for disabled individuals
Student-Centered Focus	• Policies of Student Services and Enrollment Management • Policy on Student Printing • Office of Development policy to increase privately funded scholarships	• Accessible student computer labs • Knowledgeable Academic Advising Center staff • Knowledgeable Admissions staff • Knowledgeable Financial Aid staff • Knowledgeable Registration staff • Reasonable registration policies (e.g. add/drop)
Academic Excellence	• Academic Units Academic Standards (Review) Committees • Graduate Program Approval Process • Academic Unit Promotion and Tenure Policies • Graduate Program Review	• Clearly stated policies and procedures for promotion and tenure • Unbiased policies and procedures for promotion and tenure • Clearly stated student academic standards procedures • Adequate technical support for faculty research • Adequate administrative support for faculty research
Responsive Campus Climate	• UM-Flint Emergency Response Plan • Public Safety Campus Security Handbook • EOE?	• Respectful UM-Flint faculty • Good student/faculty relationships • Good student/staff relationships • Good student/administration relationship • Freedom from Sexual Harassment on campus • Welcoming campus atmosphere
Responsible Decision-Making	• UM-Flint Faculty Code • Faculty Codes of Individual Academic Units	• Clear communication by Chancellor/Vice-Chancellors concerning objectives and policies • UM-Flint's relationship with UM-Ann Arbor • Opportunities for faculty input in administrative decision-making • Appropriate structure for faculty governance committees • Effective UM-Flint faculty code

*Additional items available from other Institutional Data

Lessons Learned

1. Start early in addressing this criterion. An early start allows for false starts and permits time for valuable debate about institutional values and integrity.

2. Create a broadly constituted workgroup so that this process can facilitate greater familiarity and understanding between academic and non-academic areas.

3. Consider using subgroups to address focused tasks. Promote "cross-fertilization" by creating heterogeneous subgroups.

4. Use this process to assess the perceptions of colleagues about policies that may be unfamiliar to them.

5. Look for existing data in all available sources. It might be the case that there has been more work done than is initially apparent. Sometimes valuable data can be found "beneath the surface."

6. Identify core institutional values (if not already explicitly stated) that may be embedded in the mission and purposes early in the process and use these to unify the self-study process and beyond. Do the mission, purposes, policies, practices, programs reflect these values? It seems to us that this question and its answer should lead us on a journey of continuous institutional self-improvement.

Suzanne Selig is Director of Health Care at University of Michigan-Flint.

Lucinda Pfalzer is Professor, Physical Therapy, and Self-Study Coordinator at University of Michigan-Flint.

Achieving Diversity: A Process

Bonnie Oberman
Ida Roldan

The Institute for Clinical Social Work (ICSW) in Chicago is the first independent, accredited graduate school of social work in the country to offer a doctoral program in clinical social work. We are a small, single-focused institution that is statistically more diverse than we realized, but less enlightened than we thought. Because our faculty and students are social workers, it is easy for us to assume that issues of diversity are not a problem. In reality, we have learned this is not the case. Through the process described below, we came to recognize problem areas and how to deal with them.

In the spring of 1997, the Institute began a Board-initiated process to examine what changes and/or improvements relating to diversity were necessary and *realistic* within our institution. The genesis and development of the ICSW cultural diversity committee epitomizes the result-oriented commitment to the eighteen-year-old Institute's growth by each constituency in its community–Board, students, faculty, alumnae. The undertaking of an examination of the Institute's diversity–not only of its student and teaching populations and their various work settings, but also of its course offerings and points of view–remains very much a work-in-progress that continues to generate ongoing enthusiasm and creative problem solving.

Prior to the Board's establishment of the committee, the North Central Association had initiated conversations about diversity with us. We, too, realized the importance of exploring these issues. Indeed, we had read with great interest a portion of the American Council on Education's 1995-96 14th Annual Report, Minorities in Higher Education:

> ...Research has shown that students benefit from a strong institutional emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism. A four-year national longitudinal study of the educational outcomes of 25,000 undergraduates at 217 four-year colleges and universities... found that students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds derive important benefits from institutional diversity efforts and from multicultural curricula and/or experiences... concludes that "emphasizing diversity either as a matter of institutional policy or in faculty research and teaching, as well as providing students with curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to confront racial and multicultural issues, are all associated with widespread beneficial effects on a student's cognitive and affective development."

Eager to meet this challenge at the Institute, we formed a committee, composed of five Board members, two students, one faculty member, and the ICSW president, who is also on the faculty. The first meeting was timed to include our only out-of-town Board member, who is a professor at the University of Dayton. She had been part of our NCA site visit team years earlier, as well as a participant in a similar undertaking at the University of Dayton, so her experience was invaluable in guiding us toward examining the dimension of our concern and establishing priorities.

The committee chair, who had prior experience with dialogues of this type, suggested initial "talking points":

- What is the Institute's commitment to enhancing diversity? Do roadblocks exist in this institution? Are we even aware of what impact diversity issues have on the Institute?
- What are realistic expectations in terms of recruitment at the Board level, the faculty level, and in student recruitment?
- Shouldn't any diversity policy be delivered from the top?
- Should we enhance our recruitment of minorities at all levels, now that our outreach into the community is expanding? How?

- What needs to change in the Institute climate and support structure to enable diverse groups to develop and flourish? There seems to be some feeling that the Institute climate is inhospitable to minority students. Is this indeed the case? What can be done? Do feminist and gay/lesbian issues, for example, take precedence over racial and ethnic minority issues?
- Shouldn't the curriculum be altered/broadened to include multicultural perspectives?
- What is the best way to make the faculty aware of the importance of these issues?

People responded enthusiastically to the free-flowing discussions at the initial meetings. The conversation allowed a full airing of people's views and concerns, encouraging valued trust (essential in such a process) among committee members. Never were these "gripe sessions," but rather much welcomed opportunities to engage in a constructive dialogue within the Institute about topics that previously had not been discussed in this context. This occurred as a direct result of the stance taken by the facilitator. She initiated the process by honestly stating that she did not assume a particular outcome. She further directed the group to look at what was realistic for this institution. She insisted that everyone's opinions would be respected and considered important, because we all learn from the experience of hearing what people say. These expectations were clearly stated, and reinforced, setting a tone of safety, openness, trust, and participation.

A student member described how participation in the process resulted immediately in learning and change. Coming into the meeting with expectations of discussions about recruitment, numbers of ethnic minorities, and diversity of the student body, she was early invited to share her experiences as a student at the Institute. She was surprised to find herself and others focusing on the student's experience in the classroom and how the curriculum may or may not be relevant to work experience with minorities. She began to appreciate the broader and complex impact of these discussions on the Institute at the Board, faculty, curriculum, student, and professional levels.

As the Board initiative got underway, its greatest strength was a determination to explore change, while not losing sight of the obligations of a small dynamic institution establishing itself as a force in the larger academic environment. It was this commitment to realism and not loftiness that allowed the committee to go steadily forward with its assignment, unexpectedly adding members as we went about our work.

The committee agreed to undertake the following tasks in order to meaningfully explore these questions:

- Examine available data and acquire data for comparison to other institutions similar to ours.
- Examine mission statement in the context of our discussion.
- Define diversity. What are the dimensions of our concerns?
- Adopt a statement for the Board that expresses its commitment to our committee's agenda and disseminate it throughout ICSW.
- Develop bold but realistic institutional policies, establishing goals and program plans, timetables, necessary resources.

When the chair suggested a summer break to busy committee members, she was resoundingly voted down. People did not want to let go of this conversation. Thus, our summer discussions revolved around the talking points, but their order of importance quickly became apparent, allowing us to prioritize our agenda and our tasks. The curriculum emerged as the area of greatest concern. It was keenly felt that the theoretical view offered was a narrow one; nor were classes addressing the needs of students with other than so-called traditional backgrounds or their possibly diverse clientele. While retaining its major focus, alumni and student committee members felt the Institute had an obligation to broaden its theoretical perspective; to make it relevant; to enrich theory, case conferences, and methods with varied points of view. Indeed, they felt there existed a certain amount of student isolation as a result of these curricular deficiencies.

There also seemed to be, on occasion, insufficient support mechanisms for certain minority students: those who faced struggles with issues external to the Institute, who realized these needs were unrecognized, and who felt uncomfortable asking for help. We asked ourselves what needed to change in the Institute climate and support structure to enable minority students to develop and flourish. Did we need to establish some type of mentoring system? We wondered if attention to sexual orientation issues had taken precedence over racial and ethnic matters, but realized that the attention to issues of sexual orientation was a result of active faculty, alumni, and students who published and worked in this area. An obvious concern about diversifying the faculty strongly emerged. Interestingly, at this time, recruitment of a diverse student body moved down the list a bit. We had been able to obtain figures for the number of doctorates awarded to social workers in 1995. Our own student population figures, broken down by ethnicity, were remarkably close to the national norm.

It was agreed that we would invite some faculty and the Dean of Admissions to meetings in the fall. They needed to be aware of and participate in our discussion. We needed to make certain that Institute constituencies realized the impact that various diversity issues had on the school. And we were on our way to developing bold but realistic policies, as well as establishing particular goals, program plans, and timetables. We were learning what resources were going to be necessary.

Fortunately, while the cultural diversity committee discussion was taking place, other Institute initiatives were dovetailing nicely with our deliberations: particular curriculum changes; the addition of a child and adolescent track and a certificate option; and various community outreach initiatives.

Furthermore, the strategic planning committee (to which the diversity committee chair belonged) had incorporated diversity strategies and performance measures into the long-range plan. Based on the goals of the diversity committee, these strategies were now a part of another Institute document, thus formalizing once again the institutional commitment. The strategic planning committee was also working to revise the mission statement to more accurately reflect the Institute's identity, as well as its commitment to enhancing diversity.

The Dean of Admissions and the Academic Dean attended our first meeting in the fall. (Both were intrigued by the openness of the discussion and asked to join us at subsequent meetings.) We discussed how we recruit, which potential students we lose during the admissions process and why, who inquires but doesn't apply, and goals for the future. While looking at some core curriculum issues, we realized that a psychodynamic approach does not address various cultural perspectives. While the literature addresses multicultural issues and has for some time, cultural issues tend to be addressed as issues of technique, rather than developmental theory.

After considerable work, we were able to draft task-oriented recommendations for four existing ICSW committees and/or constituencies–curriculum, faculty, admissions and recruitment, and board–and have liaisons from our committee relay them. A subcommittee was formed to draft a diversity policy statement for presentation to the Board of Trustees at its annual retreat.

The Board enthusiastically discussed the statement, making subtle but valuable changes. Formal adoption was postponed to the next Board meeting to allow time for further revision. The statement follows, preceded by an introduction in anticipation of the Board's formal adoption of the policy:

> The cultural diversity committee, composed of Board members, faculty, students and alumni, has been meeting since May 1997. The committee has examined the Institute's commitment to enhancing diversity, whether roadblocks exist, how diversity impacts ICSW, and what are realistic expectations in terms of recruitment at the Board, faculty and student levels. The committee's discussions have been wide-ranging and have frequently focused on numerous issues involving curriculum.
>
> In view of our work and to formalize the Institute's commitment to this effort, the committee requests that the Board adopt the following policy statement.
>
> The Institute for Clinical Social Work is strongly committed to addressing issues of diversity as they relate to all aspects of its educational program; the students, faculty, and Board; and the Institute's participation in the larger community. The Institute will provide a forum for the discussion of multicultural and diversity issues that enrich the institution and produce skilled and enlightened practitioners and scholars. Through policies, procedures and curriculum which encourage inclusion and enrichment, the Board, the president, and the faculty will foster an environment that considers diverse points of view. Institute curriculum will provide students with an awareness of the needs and norms of the diverse communities served by clinical social workers and the tools necessary for potentially serving those needs.

Following adoption of the statement, the Board mandated the President to carry out the policy and voted to make the statement part of the Institute by-laws. The President took responsibility for Institute-wide dissemination of the statement and oversight of the task-oriented recommendations.

After two years of intense and exciting work, the committee has been redefined as a consultative resource. The formalization of the policy was a gratifying first step and an outcome that benefitted from a democratic and participatory process. Within a few weeks of the wheels being set in motion, the committee was invited to join members of the faculty advisory committee to discuss recruitment of minority faculty. Most recently, the diversity committee has been helping the recruitment committee develop a broad outreach effort.

How does the ICSW experience transfer to a larger institution, a particular department within a college or university, or to a program? What principles in the Institute process are applicable to other institutions, regardless of size or academic mission? Our experience suggests a few.

1) Diversity policy must be delivered from the top of the organization, indicating that the leadership is invested in it.
2) Changing the institution to strengthen its diversity must be understood as a process, and one that begins without a predetermined outcome.
3) Trust needs to be established and maintained throughout the process.
4) It is important to examine and consider what are *realistic* goals.
5) It is important to listen to each constituency within the institution, and to remain flexible and open about membership and ideas.
6) Leaders in all important venues need to be represented, aware, and included.

While it is undoubtedly the case that a small institution can move more easily than a larger one, the Institute has effected several outcomes in a relatively short period of time. In addition to Board adoption of the diversity policy, which was endorsed by the faculty, and revision of the mission statement, these include: curriculum adjustments and a new faculty appointment; a plan to add a faculty in-service regarding diversity; diversification of Institute library holdings; a plan to review the scholarship policy; and the institution of a clinical research fellowship that will address issues of diversity in the clinical sequence, emphasizing the impact of culture on clinical practice.

This committee is an intriguing and extremely worthwhile place to sit. Members' input remains invaluable and the enthusiasm beyond expectations. As the Institute for Clinical Social Work continues to play an increasingly greater role in the higher education social work community, and as it involves its students and faculty in ever more diverse activities, its decision to establish a Cultural Diversity Committee has set in motion an important and ongoing process for its internal constituencies—a process which is, above all, about individual knowledge and enrichment, and which exemplifies the Institute's mission.

Bonnie Oberman is Vice-Chair for Community Outreach, Board of Trustees, at the Institute for Clinical Social Work in Chicago, Illinois.

Ida Roldan is a graduate of the Institute for Clinical Social Work.

Ethics for Institutions, Faculty, and Students in a Technology Enhanced Environment

Carole Beere
Gwen Hillesheim

Introduction

The distance delivery of postsecondary education is exploding in this country and around the world. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (1/7/00), between 1995 and 1998 there was a 72 percent increase in the number of distance education programs. These programs include non-degree courses, certificate programs, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, and post-baccalaureate certificates.

Nearly half of all U.S. colleges and universities offer courses through distance learning (Associated Press, 12/17/99), and they enroll close to two million students. Clearly, distance delivery of postsecondary education is not a blip on the radar screen of higher education; it is a pervasive and continuously changing model of how we deliver higher education. In embracing the new forms of distance delivery, educational leaders must be cognizant of the diverse challenges that are present.

Quality is probably the ultimate challenge. Quality is a complex topic, and within the higher education community, we should explore various aspects of the quality question. This particular session will focus on one aspect of quality: ethics—the ethics of the students, the faculty, and the institutions.

Student and Faculty Issues

Some of the more enthusiastic supporters of distance delivery dismiss questions about educational quality, and hence about ethics, by arguing that questions of quality plague traditional delivery models, as well. We concede this point, but we contend that quality issues—particularly the ethical concerns—are different and potentially greater in distance delivered programs. Why?

Several aspects of distance-delivered higher education increase the likelihood of ethical violations. For example, in contrast to traditional higher education, there is a greater chance that a student in a distance delivered program will feel anonymous, unknown to the faculty member and to his/her fellow students. Anonymity tends to reduce the internal constraints on our behavior, and thus students who are at a distance from campus may feel less compunction about committing ethical violations.

Related to the issue of anonymity is the issue of the relationship. Close relationships, those in which people feel that they are cared about, contribute to exercising control on human behavior. People often do not want to disappoint people with whom they have meaningful relationships. Do students in a distance delivered program feel that they have relationships with their faculty and fellow students? Do faculty in these programs feel obligated to their "distant" students or do they feel less of an obligation to their students because the relationships are not as apparent as in face-to-face education? Is the risk of faculty violations of ethics increased when the faculty participating in a distance delivered program do not even know each other?

E-mail communication is often an integral part of a distance delivered program, and yet there is evidence to suggest that e-mail messages can easily lead to miscommunication. How does this risk of miscommunication relate to ethical issues?

Distance delivered education is often promoted on the grounds that it is "convenient" and "easily available." Advertising seems to play a larger role in promoting distance programs than it does in traditional programs. Is there a risk that this advertising can mislead prospective students into believing that a distance delivered program requires less work from them, that it is "easy" rather than just "easily available"? Do we find a mis-match between the missions of our universities–a mission that involves providing or facilitating education–and the goals of the students–goals that may focus on obtaining credentials rather than becoming educated.

The risk of ethical violations is not limited to students–though we often find it easier to question or be critical of our students than ourselves. But, in fact, the risk of ethical failures applies to our institutions and our faculty, as well as our students.

Institutional Issues

Just as it is important to raise awareness of the questions and concerns regarding unique aspects of ethics in the online environment for students and faculty, it is also critical to raise awareness of institutional responsibilities related to distance delivery. Such issues as plagiarism, student grievances, harassment, copyright infringements, and intellectual property are all issues difficult to deal with in the distance based environment. Complicated by the distance related issues mentioned previously, such as anonymity and miscommunications, many schools have been struggling to generate academic and institutional policies as quickly as possible to deal with rapidly evolving distance programs and student demands.

Recently a brief review was made of several institutions' online student policy handbooks. It was gratifying to see that most, if not all, the online handbooks had a section dealing with many of the issues raised above. However, when proceeding to that area of the "virtual" handbook, in most cases the document was "empty." This seemed to indicate many higher education institutions have crucial awareness of the need for distance based policy dealing with ethical issues, but have yet to actually develop policy.

So what is the answer? There is no one answer to these complex series of questions. There is, however, a process to begin to answer them, and it begins with the mission and operational values of the institution. At Walden University the three foundational values are: Quality, Integrity, and Student Centeredness. These are the Quality of the institutions' programs; the Integrity of the students, administrators, and faculty; and the ability for the institution to make all decisions with the student needs aas paramount.

Quality Programs

Quality standards have been available for decades. As early as 1982 Keegan and Rumble (Verduin & Clark, 1991) addressed quality indicators as learner outcomes. However, distance based quality is different in that it must also address delivery and technology quality indicators. In addition, quality process criteria must include administrative practice, be measurable, and be ongoing (ISO9001). Hawkes (1996) in *Criteria for evaluating school based distance education programs* added the category Ethical Criteria. One example of an ethical criterion he addressed specifically was the issue of access. It is well known at this time that there are institutions charging increased tuition amounts for online courses. Hawkes would question this practice. Other criteria include 1) Technological Criteria, 2) Organizational Criteria, and 3) Instructional Criteria (Hawkes 1996).

Documentation

Dunning, Van Kerkerix, and Zabrowski (1993) define ethical quality as the process of "monitoring consistency between values and program outcomes" (p. 199). Program outcomes have been much focused on by NCA over the past several years, and it is safe to assume NCA accredited institutions have been developing specific measurable outcomes for their students. Then, according to Dunning, et.al. the process of monitoring these outcomes can contribute to awareness of problems, generation of proposed solutions, and documented change. In this respect one type of distance delivery, online courses, can actually be an asset. All aspects of technology based online courses are documented: course syllabus and expectations, discussion, assignments, testing if desired, student to faculty interactions, student to student interactions, presentations, legitimacy of citations, writing styles, etc. With documentation in place, student work, student outcomes, and student success and change can be documented. However, how many institutions have generated specific measurable outcomes for their faculty? And, how might quality and ethical processes be expanded from student work and expectations, to faculty work and expectations?

In addressing such institutional issues as plagiarism, student integrity in their work, perceived harassment, and student grievances the distance based online course documentation should be reviewed and archived by faculty and administration. This documentation of student and faculty work is invaluable for grievance officers in the grievance process.

Expectations and Quality Processes

Elliott Maise has recently been speaking about a student-institution expectation document known as a Service Learning Agreement. Walden is currently in the planning and development stage of adapting this idea to its own method of distance delivery, and its own populations. A Walden Student-Institution Learning Agreement is being developed to meet multiple needs. This document will include a clear set of expectations for students, for faculty, and for the institution. One such expectation is:

> "Assignments within course based curricula within the University are due at the stated due date and time. Feedback will be provided within seven calendar days."

As can be seen this expectation is for students (when their work is due) and for faculty (timeliness of feedback). This example of an established expectation can also be tied to outcomes for the course. Such an Expectation Document may also serve as part of the continuous quality assurance program through use as a student satisfaction survey tool, a faculty contracting and evaluation process, and a marketing tool for prospective students, and when used as an exit survey.

Conclusion

Clearly there is a wide range of issues related to ethics and quality in distance delivery. We have addressed only a few, and suggested a very small range of possibilities for addressing issues. Together we hope within this session to discuss some of the ethical issues that relate to our institutions, our faculty, and our students, and it will, hopefully, stimulate a discussion on these issues among the audience. You will not be surprised to hear that we do not have the answers, but we do think we can help to frame some of the questions for you to consider.

References

American National Standards Institute (ANSI). 1996. *Quality assurance standards-guidelines for the application of ANSI/ISO/ASQC Q9001 or Q9002 to education and training institutions.* American National Standards Institute.

Chronicle of Higher Education. 2000. Survey finds 72% rise in number of distance education programs. 46(18):A57.

Dunning, B., M. VanKekerix , and L. Zabrowski. 1993. *Reaching learners through telecommunications.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hawkes M. Criteria for evaluating school sed distance education programs. *National Association of Secondary School Principals* 80 (581):45-52.

Verduin, J, and T. Clark. 1991. Distance education: The foundations of effective practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Carole Beere is Vice President of Academic Affairs at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Gwen Hillesheim is Assistant Vice President, University Outreach and Academic Initiatives, at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

QUEST FOR QUALITY
MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 9

Quest for Quality: Distance Learning

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Distance Education Through Strategic Alliances

Scott R. Herriott

One way for a college or university to deliver its degree programs beyond the home campus is to develop a strategic alliance with another institution. An alliance is a cooperative form of governance in which both parties share responsibility for delivering a complete product or service. This form of organization occupies a middle ground conceptually between contracting out for educational products and services on the one hand and hierarchical control on the other.

Shared responsibility has to be managed carefully. This article introduces examples of several types of strategic alliance and discusses the issues of organization and management that are pertinent to the process of institutional evaluation.

Partners in Alliances Divide Responsibility

The delivery of a complete degree program entails many types of activity. The table at right lists some of the important functions in the chain of value-creating activities for a college or university. (Activities related to residential life are neglected here.)

Important Functions in the Chain of Value-Creating Activities

- Recruiting
- Admission counseling
- Application processing
- Admissions
- Academic advising
- Financial aid advising
- Registration
- Treasury (payments)
- Design of instructional materials
- Formal instruction
- Tutorial assistance
- Learning resources (library, texts, computing)
- Evaluation (design, proctoring and grading of exams)
- Record keeping
- Placement of graduates

Not all of these activities need to be conducted by the same organization. Colleges and universities often contract out functions such as marketing research and advertising. There are service firms that will qualify the leads from inquiries, which is a form of admission counseling. Jones International University uses a sister corporation to do back-office functions, such as application processing, registration, and treasury. And some universities contract out for library services for their online students.

The activities that educational institutions tend to hold on to are those that are closest to the central purposes and distinctive competencies of a degree-granting institution: admission, advising, instruction, evaluation, and the awarding of degrees. These are the core functions.

In a *strategic alliance*, two organizations divide the responsibility for these core functions.

In educational alliances, the institution that is ultimately responsible to the student is the one that awards the degree. However, in the accreditation process, the scope of institutional evaluation should extend across all core functions of education. For this reason, it is important for consultant-evaluators and university leaders to understand how to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational structures in which responsibility for the core functions is shared.

This paper reviews several models of strategic alliance in distance education. The simpler models are seen in programs that are delivered to nearby corporate sites. A somewhat more complicated model is found in alliances that cross national boundaries and that involve cooperation between two institutions of higher education.

Alliances with Corporations

Stanford University has been using its Instructional Television Network for many years to deliver engineering courses to corporate sites in the Bay Area by microwave TV. In this basic **site-based model** of distance education, the hosting corporation is responsible for maintaining the physical environment of the classroom—space and equipment—and the university takes responsibility for all other educational functions.

Recently, universities have added online delivery methods and two-way video-conferencing to make the distant students' experience more like that of the students at the home campus. Notre Dame delivers its Executive MBA program in this way to sites hosted by Ameritech, Carrier Corporation, and Owens-Illinois. Like Stanford, Notre Dame controls all educational functions. It even stations a full-time employee at each corporate site to provide nonacademic student services such as admissions, registration, student accounts, and proctoring of exams.

Undergraduate programs are also delivered to corporations. San Jose State partners with Hewlett-Packard in a Corporate Undergraduate Degree Program. San Jose's director of the Business Student Advisement Center visits the site periodically to provide academic advising, graduation processing, and other student services. When tutors are needed, SJSU sends them to the site.

☐ Alliances with Corporate Universities

Many corporations have come to recognize the importance of intellectual capital in the emerging economy. These have tried to position themselves as "learning organizations," so there has been a trend toward enhancing the traditional Training and Development (T&D) department of a firm by making it into a "corporate university." There are probably more than 100 firms that have established corporate universities. Many are still performing traditional T&D functions, but some are moving toward course offerings that take a longer time to complete and that maybe very advanced intellectually. The corporate universities tend to have excellent learning resources and to be staffed by professionals in industrial education.

Degree-granting institutions that link up with corporate universities find that their partner has more than the usual skill set to contribute to the educational endeavor. The corporate university might contribute such functions as:

- application processing
- registration
- treasury (payments)
- tutorial assistance
- learning resources (corporate library)
- proctoring exams
- academic advising (monitoring student performance)

As an example, San Jose State University delivers its MBA degree to National Semiconductor Corporation using the facilities of National Semiconductor University. NSU provides an Educational Coordinator who assists the program by disseminating information and collecting documentation such as transcripts. NSU's facilities include classrooms and breakout rooms, all equipped with VCRs, overhead projectors, and networking and videoconference capability. The corporation has an Information Resource Center, formerly the Technical Library, that houses technical materials on site. It is staffed by qualified reference librarians who can help students with literature searches, market and technology reports, and document delivery.

The director of National Semiconductor University reported in 1996 that the corporation then had 186 students enrolled in a variety of on-site degree programs, including an accelerated A.A. program, and bachelor's and master's degrees in business and in electrical engineering from one community college and three universities (Wheeler, 1996). NSU at the time was keen to help employees who had only a high school education, but it was also clear that these employees needed extra student services. Wrote Wheeler,

> One of the forgotten factors in making a degree program successful is overcoming the very fundamental educational weakness the students may have. Many of these students have not been in a classroom for years, and study skills are weak. They are also rusty in English grammar, in writing and in arithmetic. To overcome these potential limitations, we located employees—particularly recent college graduates—who would be willing to tutor students on an ongoing basis. This part of the program has been a real success. More than 20 people volunteered for tutoring duties and student/tutor pairs can be found sprinkled all over the university just before classes start.

Since 1996, NSU has narrowed its partnerships to one degree program with one institution, the MBA at San Jose State.

International Alliances with Educational Institutions

When a university delivers a distance degree program internationally, some of the core functions become more difficult for the university to perform on its own. It may be easy to deliver the instruction, using the internet, videotapes, videoconference, or broadcasts. But international recruitment is difficult, and application processing may be very tedious and costly when correspondence about incomplete applications requires transcontinental communications. Transfers of U.S. dollars by citizens may be restricted by the government. Local libraries may not adequately supplement web-based resources. Students may require more tutorial assistance than can be given by e-mail. And proctoring examinations is always a challenge when students work at a distance.

In late 1998, MIT publicized its agreement to participate with the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University as "a new paradigm for distance collaboration in research and education." Courses at both locations are held in classrooms equipped for live, synchronous videc transmission over the Internet. However, students are registered only with their home institutions, which are self-sufficient in providing student services.

☐ The Assisted Site-Based Model of Distance Education

Maharishi University of Management has been offering an M.B.A. program to students in India since 1995 in cooperation with Maharishi Institute of Management (M.I.M.), a local Indian institution that is affiliated with the university through a common approach to learning. The Delhi site of M.I.M. was already conducting its own Indian equivalent of the M.B.A. degree, a postgraduate diploma in business administration (PGDBA). It had its own classrooms, library, and computer facilities.

Originally, Maharishi University of Management delivered the M.B.A. program according to the site-based model, as if M.I.M. were a corporate site. The university had a site coordinator locally who was responsible for maintaining the classroom and equipment. Videotapes of class lectures were sent to the M.I.M. sites to be played daily. Daily assignments for individuals and groups were clearly stated in the syllabus. The professor in the U.S. would respond to e-mail questions and call the class on a conference telephone periodically. The site coordinator would administer and proctor the exams sent by the professors and return them to the U.S. by express mail. The functions performed by M.I.M. beyond those of the basic site-based model were recruitment; the collection of applications; handling payment of fees; and providing library services, proctoring exams, and some placement services to graduates.

Several difficulties soon surfaced. The students in India were all 21 or 22 years of age. It is part of the Indian culture that after a child enters the work force, parents tend not to support further study, so students who want graduate degrees tend to pass immediately from the bachelor's to master's programs. These young students did not have the same motivation or maturity as the typical American M.B.A. class. They felt that they were not receiving an education by watching the videotapes, even though they were getting the same classroom experience as the American students who were in the room during the taping. They also wanted explicit instruction on the relevance of the M.B.A. courses to their local culture and economy.

In response, Maharishi University of Management developed a stronger alliance with M.I.M. by delegating some of the core educational functions of the M.B.A. program. The Delhi site used its PGDBA faculty to assist the U.S. professors. The M.I.M. faculty began organizing the students' classroom activities, helping with homework questions, lecturing on the Indian context of the course, and arranging for guest lecturers and field trips. The other sites, where the PGDBA was not being given, hired tutors specifically for the M.B.A. students, as did Delhi when the M.B.A. program grew in numbers. This modification of the basic site-based model may be termed the **assisted site-based model** of distance education.

Both in Delhi and the other sites, the tutors were highly qualified, having at least a master's degree from a local institution and in many cases a doctoral degree. Their presence solved the problems in the classroom, but this delegation of some core educational functions had its own challenges. The "tutors" were professional educators, many of whom had taught at other universities. They did not want to be treated as teaching assistants. It may have been a matter of national pride as well. This situation required a high degree of cross-cultural sensitivity on the part of the U.S. faculty to work with the Indian tutors as colleagues yet maintain clarity about the locus of authority for the M.B.A. policies and procedures. The professors at Maharishi University of Management began to refer to them as "local resource faculty" and would communicate regularly with them by e-mail and telephone.

The local resource faculty administered and proctored the examinations sent from the U.S., but after the program was going for a while, they began to make a preliminary scoring of the exams before shipping them to the U.S. This was important, because Maharishi University of Management teaches on the block system—one course at a time for four weeks. The express mail carrier would take five-eight days to deliver packages between India and the U.S. It was essential that the students quickly received preliminary feedback on their performance, and the local resource faculty provided that feedback.

The M.B.A. faculty at Maharishi University of Management spent a lot of time over several years discussing adaptations of academic policies suggested by the site coordinators or the local resource faculty. The most significant issue was the request that the distance education students be permitted to take a re-examination in a subject to improve their grade. This was said to be a common practice in India, and the students assumed it to be the policy in the M.B.A. program at M.I.M. sites, because nothing to the contrary had been written in the M.B.A. program prospectus. Out of sensitivity to local customs, the M.B.A. faculty permitted re-exams for students who had passed a course (but not for those who had failed). But after a year or so, the Graduate Committee of Maharishi University of Management reviewed this policy and decided against it. Future issues of the prospectus will explicitly state the policy against re-examinations.

These examples suggest that the original contract between Maharishi University of Management and the Maharishi Institute of Management in India became out of date rather quickly. However, no new contract was ever written. The policies and procedures governing the relationship between the two educational institutions evolved through experience. Some became codified in formal documents, such as the M.B.A. program prospectus, but others were simply part of the history of understandings expressed in memos and e-mail. This is typical of "relational contracting," which is the form of governance used to manage inter-organizational relationships—such as strategic alliances and joint ventures—that are intermediate in structure between market transactions and hierarchical control (Williamson, 1986).

Conclusions

☐ Summary of the Main Points

1. It is already common practice to purchase or contract for some of the functions that make a degree program possible, so institutions are already choosing which functions to delegate and which to retain in house. No educational institution is doing it all alone.
2. There are other organizations active in education that have resources that can beneficially be used in a degree program. Corporate universities and overseas institutions of higher education are examples.
3. The choice for American universities is not merely between contracting out or retaining internally the various value-creating activities. Cooperative relationships can be created and managed, but they require a cooperative form of governance—between contracting and hierarchical control.

☐ Lessons Learned

This paper does not report on enough cases of the assisted site-based model of distance learning to suggest authoritatively a set of principles of good practice for this type of interorganizational cooperation. However, the lessons learned at Maharishi University of Management suggest a few such principles.

1. The degree-granting institution should retain authority over the methods and criteria for evaluating students' educational outcomes and over the most essential methods of instruction.
2. The locus of responsibility for each activity necessary for the degree program should be clearly understood by both parties and expressed in writing through a contract or a through a collection of memoranda that reflects the history of experience.

3. The degree-granting institution should routinely and systematically evaluate the partner's performance of all delegated activities.

4. The degree-granting institution should recognize that the relationship with the partner will evolve. The capabilities, norms, and expectations of the partner—be it an overseas institution or a corporate university—will become clearer and may change over time. The degree-granting institution should be alert to these and should seek to advance the interests of the partner while remaining faithful to its own purposes and standards.

Resources

Information about the Corporate University Collaborative is available at http://www.traininguniversity.com/

The Corporate University Xchange also provides services to corporate universities and has a bulletin board where participants can exchange questions and ideas. http://www.corpu.com/

References

Wheeler, Kevin B. 1996. Academic-corporate partnerships enhance employee development at National Semiconductor. *Corporate University Review* 4:3, May-June. http://www.traininguniversity.com/magazine/may_jun96/national.html

Williamson, Oliver E. 1987. *The economic institutions of capitalism: Firms, markets, and relational contracting.* Free Press.

Scott Herriott is Professor of Business Administration and Dean of Online Education at Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, Iowa.

Online Higher Education Trains Knowledge Workers for the 21st Century

Robin Throne
Kersten Shepard

> The newly emerging dominant group is "knowledge workers." The very term was unknown forty years ago. (I coined it in a 1959 book, Landmarks of Tomorrow.) By the end of this century knowledge workers will make up a third or more of the work force in the United States—as large a proportion as manufacturing workers ever made up, except in wartime. The majority of them will be paid at least as well as, or better than, manufacturing workers ever were. And the new jobs offer much greater opportunities.
>
> —Peter Drucker
> "The Age of Social Transformation"

Overview

Since 1995, Hamilton College has developed and invested in the academic and technological infrastructure needed to support distance education through an online educational delivery platform. To achieve this, the College launched a planning process that led to concept development, research and peer evaluations, collaborative forums and presentations, and an assessment of need to determine how it would proceed in the pursuit of online associate degree and certificate program delivery. Through this planning process, all groups within the system became involved in the development of distance education delivery.

- Faculty and academic leadership provided the planning and design for the distance education curriculum and learner-centered instructional delivery.
- Technology faculty and administrative staff provided the planning, design and support for the technology infrastructure, technology curriculum, and technology training.
- Administrative leadership and staff provided opportunities for educational development, training, and implementation of new and innovative models for educational delivery.

The overall goal of Hamilton College's distance education programs is to offer quality education to students regardless of time or geographical barriers. Students are able to complete their courses or programs in a shorter span of time through an anytime, anywhere platform. A benefit to online learning is the increased knowledge and skill in the use of technology that students gain while they are engaged in their studies.

Online Learning for a New Era

Educational and technology research have shown that students learn more, faster through learner-centered and technology-mediated modes of instruction. The technology-mediated delivery format of online distance courses offers students the convenience and flexibility to pursue their higher education goals at any time or place. Through this online platform, students also gain the everyday technology skills needed to participate in today's global society. The integration of personal and professional development with technology-mediated delivery allows students to achieve a quality educational experience that supplements subject-matter mastery. This is achieved in academic programs at Hamilton College, both residential and online, where faculty utilize technology- and learner-centered instructional models.

Through the process that led to an internal definition and philosophy for what constitutes the precise meaning and denotation for the term *distance education,* the Colleges reviewed other models and platforms for course delivery that separated instructors and students. In this review, it was determined that several institutions were largely using the term *distance education* to describe learning that was delivered through real-time technology, but only allowed for the physical separation of students and the instructor, not the complete elimination of time and space restrictions.

Although these expensive and complex networks of telecourses[1] have allowed students to be able to spend less time in travel or classroom seat-time, these delivery methods still require an element of synchronized or scheduled time, often at a separate location from the student's home or work location. In spite of the investment in the technological infrastructure used to support these systems, several institutions have now found (as Hamilton College found in the research) that true learning anytime, anywhere exists online through the Internet.

The Internet, accessed through the WWW, provides the wealth of information and data needed to support online course content. The interconnectivity that the Internet provides supports a learning model or philosophy based upon a constructivist's[2] approach to knowledge acquisition. This sort of learning allows students to build their knowledge and skills through collaboration and peer interaction, self-guided learning activities, and Web research. There is no room for the instructor to bestow his or her knowledge upon receptive students who then offer back the same information. Instead, information is sorted, filtered, digested, and shared through a variety of communication devices online in a non-linear schedule. Learning is then assessed or measured, using authentic assessments[3], against the course learning outcomes that have been designed according to Bloom's Taxonomy and other measures of cognitive or skill development.

At Hamilton College, the broadly-defined term of *distance education* has subsequently become a specifically clarified term that involves online synchronous and asynchronous learning elements, engaged students, interactivity between learners and instructors, convenience and flexibility, and mastery of course content rather than hours in a classroom seat. For clarification and specification purposes, the College's definition of the term *distance education* connotes all of these elements incorporated in online educational delivery and not the technology of instructional delivery alone.

The College established the following as an operational definition and philosophy for distance education within the system:

Distance Education Philosophy

> Hamilton College provides quality distance education that offers a learning environment for faculty and students who are unable to meet at the same location or are distanced by any separation of place and/or time. The College employs distance education that is learner-centered and interactive through synchronous and/or asynchronous delivery.

Hamilton College's online delivery platform is distinguished by its requirements for synchronous and asynchronous communication, collaborative learning activities, and the appeal to all styles of learners. This online learning model ensures that students are engaged and interactive in the learning process, but at the same time allows for a delivery format that is flexible and convenient enough for active or restricted lifestyles.

Synchronous communication is offered through a unique online audio-conferencing/text-conferencing feature in the virtual classroom. In real-time, faculty and learners meet to discuss scenario-based learning situations that parallel real-world experiences. This engagement between learners and faculty, and between learners, is an essential feature of this online educational delivery. The asynchronous (online communication in which interaction between parties does not take place simultaneously) features of the virtual classroom allow for faculty and learners to communicate in a dialogue outside of real-time constraints. Through bulletin board discussion, document posting, and integrated electronic mail systems, faculty and learners can log in and communicate at any time and from any place.

In addition to mastering course subject matter, learners enrolled in online courses gain the everyday technology skills needed to be effective employees in the 21st century. Through an instructional design that focuses on learning styles, engagement and interactivity, and peer collaboration, students in online courses have a rich learning experience that allows them to develop technical competency along with subject-matter expertise.

Training the Knowledge Worker

Many Hamilton College students have begun to recognize the fact that the sheer involvement in taking an online course helps them to develop essential skills needed to become effective employees in the 21st century. Increasingly today, employers are asking for graduates who possess the personal and professional skills necessary to function effectively in the workplace. Through the distance associate degree and certificate programs, students gain access to a stair-step process toward their higher learning potential. The learner-centered and technology-mediated structure of distance education allows students to learn more, faster and to meet the needs of employers through the development and mastery of the essential personal and professional knowledge and skills for graduates.

Educational and technology research have shown that students learn more, faster through learner-centered and technology-mediated modes of instruction. The technology-mediated delivery format of distance courses offers students the convenience and flexibility to pursue their higher education goals at any time or place. Through the online platform, students also gain the everyday technology skills needed to participate in today's global society. The integration of personal and professional development with technology-mediated delivery allows students to achieve a quality educational experience that supplements subject-matter mastery.

Some of the "Knowledge Worker" skills developed through Hamilton College online course participation include:

- electronic communication organization
- web research
- remote project collaboration
- remote project management
- data management (proximal and remote)
- data compression and transfer
- remote media presentation and conferencing

For students who enroll in online courses or programs, Internet delivery can mean the ability to complete course and program requirements and enter the workplace in a shorter span of time with advanced technology skills. The convenience and flexibility of distance offerings allow students to better manage their busy lifestyles and other life demands. In addition, students in distance courses acquire and develop the basic, everyday technology skills needed in this information age. These technology skills are imbedded in the course learning as students utilize electronic communication and information access through the distance delivery platform.

A demographic profile of 530 students enrolled in distance courses from September 1997 through July 1998 shows a population made up of 77% females with an average age of 29. These statistics parallel several studies from the National Center for Higher Education Statistics that have shown that adult female learners are the fastest growing student population among U.S. higher education institutions. Hamilton College expects this sector to continue to remain a viable student base for distance education, as the convenience and flexibility of Internet delivery allows these students to integrate their higher education aims into their daily schedules. Adult learners tend to have the self-direction and motivation needed to succeed in a distance learning environment. When residential offerings or synchronously scheduled courses are the only option, these goals may be set aside due to time, geographic, and other constraints.

Removing Barriers to Persistence for Online Learners

"Continuing education is about location, location, location" (Speer 1996). Convenience factors can be barriers to student motivation or pave the way for persistence. One of the major contributors to the convenience factor is program location in relation to the students' workplace or home. More than half of the adult part-time students surveyed by The College Board in 1986 reported that location was the primary factor influencing their choice of institution. Another 18 percent ranked it second. Academic institutions have often responded to the convenience factor by opening up centers in office buildings near students' jobs and homes. Students who could attend close to work or home did not have to deal with frustrations created by driving time and traffic. Attending close to home or work can leave more study time for the student, time which might have been otherwise spent on the road. Physical proximity is not the only convenience factor facing adult students. Because students often have to work full-time job schedules, they want early morning and evening classes. Not only have many colleges responded to needs by providing opportunities close to home or work, they have also put together creative schedules that appeal to adult students and make it possible for them to pursue postsecondary educational programs while working full-time jobs and dealing with complex schedules and family responsibilities.

Now, with online learning options such as offered by Hamilton College, these issues of convenience and proximity are even more enhanced for the student. The combination of online course delivery and courses taken in the residential college setting provides students with the convenience and flexibility to carry heavier course loads and overcome barriers that may have prevented them from successfully achieving their higher education goals. Thus, the overall vision for distance education at Hamilton College is to provide a quality education to students at any location, regardless of time or geographic barriers. This holds true for students who choose to pursue a degree online or in a combination with residential study.

"The intense development of new options in learning over the past 20 years has happened largely outside of the mainstream institutions, which continue to offer education designed for the younger student, not for working adults" (Darr 1998). As an increasing number of colleges and universities offer more and more courses through the Internet and other online technologies, students can save years in classroom study to complete a degree. In addition, the timesavings through online higher education can mean accomplishing their higher education aims in spite of a busy, active lifestyle. The benefit of this to employers are the committed and qualified workers that enter the workplace already equipped with the technology and subject matter knowledge and skills needed for success.

The Future in Online Higher Education

Technology continues to be a driving force in changing an educational paradigm. As Internet traffic increases and more and more households in the U.S. acquire personal computers, Hamilton College has managed growth in online courses and programs concurrent with these trends. Assessment of established institutional goals and outcomes offers the College assurance strategies by which to measure this progress for the future.

Participation in the U.S. Department of Education's Distance Education Demonstration Program provides Hamilton College with unique opportunities. Over the next five years, Congress will determine new guidelines for online educational delivery in the wake of high-tech advancements. An explosive growth in distance education is expected through 2020 as more and more U.S. households acquire personal computers, and more and more networks are linked globally via the Internet. Higher education accessed through the World Wide Web brings the world's knowledge to the desktop PC. By 2005, one billion users are expected to be online, and consumers continue to be attracted to online higher education because of its convenience, flexibility, and the timesaving advantages over traditional forms of learning. No longer will learning consist of core subject matter, but will be enhanced through the platform from which it is deliveredæto the exclusion of time and space restrictions.

For more information on Hamilton College's online degree programs, visit www.hamiltonia.edu/hconline.

References

Darr, Dixie. 1998. Rethink tuition policies. *Workforce* 77(5):104.

Speer, Tibbett L. 1996. A nation of students. *American Demographics* 18(8):32-38. PerAbs. Online. First Search. 10 March 1999.

Notes

[1] **Telecourse:** A course presented by television using broadcast, cable, microwave, or video distribution.

[2] **Constructivist:** Used here as the converse to the behaviorist's view that the student's mind is seen as an empty vessel, a *tabula rasa* to be filled or as a mirror reflecting reality, but rather that knowledge is "constructed" through learning experiences that parallel the real world.

[3] **Authentic Assessment:** Any type of assessment that requires students to demonstrate skills and competencies that realistically represent problems and situations likely to be encountered in real-world work or life situations.

Robin Throne is Chief Academic Officer at Hamilton College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Kersten Shepard is Associate Dean for Curriculum Development and Institutional Effectiveness at Hamilton College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The Quest for Quality: Implementing and Documenting a Distance Education Partnership

Linda L. Byington
Jennifer Byron

Overview

Three colleges–Davenport College, Detroit College of Business, and Great Lakes College–are formally organized as a legal entity, the Davenport Educational System, Inc. Together they serve more than 15,000 students on 20 campuses spanning Michigan and Northern Indiana. The colleges serve a significant population of adults who increasingly require a distributed learning environment, including technological and distance delivery means to fulfill their learning needs.

While each of the colleges is separately accredited by the North Central Association, they are strongly connected by the common mission of providing excellent service to students and offering similar quality programs, designed to prepare people for successful careers in business, allied health, and legal studies. They have also been linked historically and practically by a pattern of working together whenever it has proven advantageous for solving mutual challenges. Thus, a history of connections and collaborations established the logical platform for the creation of a consortium of the three colleges, utilizing the DES, Inc., Learning Network as the service entity to provide the technology and accompanying support systems for the delivery of online courses.

In addition to the aforementioned connections and collaborations among the colleges of the Davenport Educational System, the creation of the Consortium has provided outstanding opportunities to leverage and share technological resources as well as academic expertise for the effective, efficient, quality delivery of online courses offered by the three colleges. Examples include a System-wide Technology Infrastructure that has provided the essential base for the online course delivery and a developing Library Knowledge Retrieval System, designated to enhance access and utilize information resources more fully and effectively for all the colleges' faculty and students.

Beyond the other benefits described, the necessarily collaborative nature of the Consortium has provided significant opportunities for institutional learning and continuous improvement. The process of completing the self-study while implementing this technological delivery is a primary example of this learning. It is these two aspects–completing the self-study and implementing the basic tools of the Consortium–that provide the major focus for the core of this paper. Additionally a section on the collaboration and partnerships built during this process is discussed.

Completing the Self-Study

The changing and more technology-based nature of higher education is leading to some necessarily creative and flexible processes and procedures, both on the part of colleges and the North Central Association. In determining the best way to prepare for this unique focused visit, the Consortium sought consultative advice from NCA. It was agreed that the most effective approach in this case would be to write a single self-study document in which each college sought approval to offer existing degrees in business through distance delivery methods. The ten questions to support "A Request for Institutional Change" (NCA *Handbook*, 2nd edition, 1997) provided the structural framework.

The documentation for Question Nine required the most extensive evidence (making up more than half of the seventy-three page document) to show that "the institution has established the processes and has the capability to initiate and maintain the proposed change and to monitor acceptable quality...." Here it was necessary to provide detailed information on such important areas of development and implementation as faculty responsibilities, oversight, and support for professional development; appropriate technology for both faculty and student teaching/learning needs; policy development and deployment; as well as clear evidence of the means to assess student learning. This evidence was specifically organized around both the NCA Distance Learning Guidelines and the Consortium's own Distance Education Guidelines.

It was also important to the nature of this request to provide significant information for the team's review in an online format, just as it is seen by students, faculty, and staff. To this end, the visiting team members were provided with website addresses where they could view course screen demonstrations, student orientation and support services information, faculty training tools, as well as other information. Convene.com, the primary partner to support teaching and learning processes presented their software-based tools as well. It was also possible before, during, and even after the visit for the team members to continue their dialogue with students in an online, discussion board format.

Paper support and documentation for the team's review onsite was organized in a series of loose leaf notebooks, purposefully organized in a manner that would prove useful to the Learning Network staff, as well as multiple Consortium administrators and faculty for future reference. Keeping these materials updated as a continuous resource has proven to be very useful.

The focused visit took place November 8-9, 1999. The team report of the visit was very positive; however, it should be noted that at the time of this writing, formal Commission approval to offer complete degree programs has not yet been granted.

Implementing the Learning Network: The Work of the Consortium

The three colleges' primary reason for seeking to offer degree programs through distance delivery methods was to be more effective in serving students' needs for flexible and accessible learning in a rapidly changing and highly competitive environment where the businesses and industries that employ the colleges' students expect outstanding technological preparation appropriate to their needs. In serving large numbers of employed adult learners (the range of average students' age within the Consortium colleges for fall 1999 was 29-32 years), the colleges have an established history of providing flexible, accessible learning options. Therefore, establishing the Consortium and partnering with the DES, Inc. Learning Network to provide online courses and the essential support services seemed like a logical extension of the colleges' missions and history of working together.

Yet, at the same time, this technological venture required new kinds of creative collaboration and tested the skills of all involved. It required the modification and use of existing tools, jointly developed, as well as new tools that needed to be created together. It is in this process that much institutional learning has taken place. Perhaps the most essential existing tool is the Academic Guidelines. Developed in 1988, these guidelines established academic criteria in six areas–administration, faculty, educational programs, learning resources, academics, and student support services–and were specifically designed to ensure the delivery of quality programs on all campuses. More recently, with the collaborative efforts involved in the development of the Learning Network, administrative and faculty involvement was sought to revise the Academic Guidelines, making them current and comprehensive, and ultimately compatible with the relationship among all three colleges and the evolving Learning Network.

A process similar to the one used for refining the Academic Guidelines (available as a session handout) was used to develop the Distance Education Guidelines. Using the NCA Distance Learning Guidelines as a base, the three colleges discussed the implications of adopting and adapting these guidelines and ultimately established a version that molded them to the three colleges, making it possible to develop consistent academic policies and procedures that emanate from these.

With these foundational sets of guidelines for direction, the operational "driving force" for implementation has been the Academic Decision-Making Grid (also available as a session handout). Designed to establish and clarify areas of decision making, the grid has become a compass for action by delineating areas of focus and responsibility–for faculty, divisions/departments, vice-presidents, and presidents–at the course, program, college, and Consortium levels.

Three new consortial teams were established to develop and implement the processes necessary for this collaboration.

- **Academic Excellence Team**—consists of the Academic Vice Presidents of all three colleges, the Executive Director, and the Academic Director of the Learning Network established to strategically implement curriculum structure and to provide leadership for assessment, policy and accreditation issues.
- **Faculty Academic Task Force**—consists of three faculty representatives from each college and the Academic Director of the Learning Network established to focus on the coherence and quality of curriculum and programs, including the documentation and review of assessment of student learning.
- **Faculty Development Team**—consists of a blend of faculty from all three colleges who early on distinguished themselves as outstanding facilitators in this distance learning environment. Their role is to mentor new faculty and create continuous professional development options.

These consortial teams have provided many opportunities for institutional learning within and among the three colleges as they share best practices and common challenges faced by their organizations.

Building Partnerships: Extending Collaboration

To ensure that the colleges' online students always have access to the latest systems and services to support their learning needs, the Learning Network has chosen to outsource and contract services from certain industry-leading providers. In this way the colleges and their faculty members can maximize the strength of their core competency in the development, implementation, and assessment of their courses and programs, while gaining the complementary core competencies of others. This unbundling concept, increasingly described in the literature, is a means by which colleges and universities involved in distance delivery can leverage what they do best, i.e., produce intellectual content for education (Katz 1999).

Perhaps the most extensive collaboration is with Convene.com as a partner in providing the learning software platform, 24/7 technical support and faculty support. This software based communication platform was selected early in the development stages of the consortium. Representative faculty, academic leadership, and Learning Network staff reviewed and interviewed three service providers using standardized criteria in the selection process. Convene provided the learning environment that most closely aligned with the culture of the colleges by providing small, discussion-based, collaborative course environments. Coupled with the extensive faculty training in online instructional design, the Convene solution allowed for instructor-created and instructor-led learning that was critical to the launch of the program. The decision to outsource this service rather than develop and support an internal system has also flexibility in moving to other learning platforms as the needs of the consortium and sophistication of learners increases.

Other critical partnerships provide such services as online book ordering and distribution, development and support of web-page sites, touchtone/web registration systems, faculty instructional design training, and advertising/marketing planning. These partnerships have allowed the consortium to grow cost effectively and quickly, maintain quality customer service, and move nimbly into new service areas. Using existing, proven curricula from the three colleges, consortial teams, and the outsourcing concept, the Learning Network has been able to grow four-fold in enrollment in one year without the addition of staff.

It is important to note what is not outsourced: the core competencies of the consortium collegesæthe development, implementation, and assessment of the distance education courses and programs offered through the Learning Network.

Summary

Final observations of key ideas and learning that have resulted both from the planning and implementation of the Consortium and the supporting Learning Network as well as from the analysis and documentation inherent in the self-study process are described below:

- There is a strong history of collaboration among the three colleges that has created common bonds for solving mutual problems.
- Decision-making models such as the foundational Academic Guidelines provide a current framework for strategic decision making and for developing tools particularly appropriate to this technology venture, such as the Distance Education Guidelines and the Academic Decision-making Grid.

- The three colleges in the Consortium are very supportive of the request to offer degree programs online, as is the overall Davenport Educational System, Inc.
- Increasing students' opportunities for "success in business and related careers" in the rapidly changing and highly competitive technological and global world is a primary motivation for seeking to offer degree programs online, in a format conducive to the needs of many adult learners for flexible, accessible learning opportunities.
- The colleges intend to offer existing courses and programs by a new medium of online technology.
- The colleges maintain quality control over their core business: developing and reviewing courses and programs and assessing student learning.
- While all issues relative to faculty and teaching via distance learning are not fully resolved, faculty members from all three colleges are involved in a manner that is fair and consistent across the three colleges. Continuous development will increasingly engage faculty in even broader dimensions of the process.
- The Consortium and the Learning Network agree that outsourcing those needed competencies where others are more skilled is the best kind of partnering and provides multiple opportunities for continuous learning.
- The Consortium and the Learning Network offer opportunities for applied research and for utilizing the results for the benefit not only of students in online courses and programs but all students of the colleges.
- The process of writing the self-study and gathering the documentation while simultaneously developing and implementing the Consortium and Learning Network has been a valuable learning experience. Each has added value to the other, providing dynamic and continuous learning.

Reference

Katz, Richard N., and Associates, ed. 1999. *Dancing with the devil: Information technology and the new competition in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Linda L. Byington is Vice President of Planning and Accreditation at Davenport College of Business in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Jennifer Byron is Director of Academic Services at DES, Inc., in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A Collaborative Problem-Based Model for Distance Education: A Master of Arts in Teaching Program that Supports Peer Collaboration Among Teachers

Hattie Gilmore
Larry Gregg
Karen Evans

Introduction

The choices in distance education are vast and growing rapidly. Graduate students who need more flexibility than the traditional schedule of a college campus find distance education appealing. The opportunity to offer a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) program to practicing teachers who otherwise might not be able to participate was appealing to the educational partnership of Saint Mary College and SkyLight Professional Development. There are, of course, challenges with this educational format, including two issues of critical importance to all involved. The program must combine theory and practice into a relevant and challenging curriculum, and the college and department mission of "building a community of learners" is as important in distance learning as it is for on-campus students. There was a commitment that students who are scattered across two states would not feel isolated. As Saint Mary College and SkyLight Professional Development developed the curriculum for the Master of Arts in Teaching, these priorities gave rise to the unique aspects of this program.

Program Description

Students in the M.A.T. program receive approximately seven and half hours of videotape, along with textbooks and a study guide tailored to the instructional material for each course. The videos allow students to "hear" from leading educational researchers and theorists, "see" real K-12 classrooms, and learn from master teachers and administrators as they reflect on teaching. The texts are chosen to enhance the videos and other information. The study guide provides information on assignments, as well as Internet and other research resources. The curriculum is developed around study, analysis, reflection, and application of current education theory and issues, with action research, professional portfolio development, and technology woven throughout

The Problem-Based Learning Framework

The problem-based learning approach engages participants in solving classroom dilemmas/challenges related to the content of each course. Participants identify an issue or dilemma in their classrooms. Then, using the videotapes, textbooks, supplementary readings, Internet resources, and instructor feedback, they gather information on the issue or dilemma and formulate potential interventions and solutions. Next, a plan is designed for solving the dilemma and implemented in the participant's classroom. Finally, a report is submitted on the outcome of the intervention with a reflective self-assessment and artifacts.

The problem-based learning model leads participants to discover direct applications of the course content and strategies to their own professional practice. Participants become more self-directed in their learning and are able to develop meaningful and constructive applications of the course content.

The problem-based learning model focuses on:

- constructing meaning,
- increasing self-directed learning with guidance and coaching by the facilitator,
- promoting higher-order thinking,
- fostering interpersonal skills and collaboration, and
- developing strong student-instructor coaching and mentoring relationship (Evans, 1999, p.17)

The feedback from participants has confirmed the strength of this model. Master's students report that this program is already making a difference in their classrooms. One participant recently e-mailed that, "I am thoroughly enjoying my classes and can already see improvement in my teaching. I have other faculty members coming to my room to see what strategies I have implemented."

Collaboration and Interaction

Collaboration has been built into the M.A.T. program from the first moment. Program developers have modeled the collaborative process as they continue to develop the program.

Participants are required to seek out and attain peer feedback on their plans. Beyond that simple step, participants are encouraged to begin in the program with colleagues and, guided by instructors, to communicate on-line with others facing similar problems. Instructors provide feedback at each step of the problem-based format in the form of suggestions, resources, questions, and encouragement. Lazar (1995) stated that this interaction helps students share strategies and challenge each other, as well as grow academically and intellectually. A participant commented that this sharing "really gets the creative juices flowing."

When asked how the collaboration has affected their learning in the M.A.T., participants' responses fell mainly into the following categories:

Collaboration allows

- sharing of ideas/strategies
- acquiring objective (and safe) assistance on problems
- brainstorming
- new insights
- the ability to question and receive responses
- support and direction to complete the program
- growth as advice is received and given
- a challenge and inspiration to be a better teacher
- time to ponder as we talk or write
- a chance to break the isolations and create a needed connection to other professionals

This aspect of collaboration is nurtured carefully by the instructors. They base much of their interactive work with participants on the work of Peter Senge (1990) in attempting to establish learning organizations. Instructors use strategies and statements that build a climate of strengthening the personal mastery of these practicing teachers. A climate is developed where it is safe for participants to create a vision, where inquiry is the norm, and where challenging the status quo is allowed. Participants are invited to question and reflect upon their assumptions and beliefs. Timely feedback is provided that encourages and celebrates innovative and responsible risk taking. Instructors work at creating a personalized environment where participants are known and cared for. The distance education format does not detract from this goal. The strength of the collaboration that is built into the program actually enhances this design.

As one participant said, "[one of my on-line partners] is also an inspiration when I see the depth of her projects. It inspires me to keep going and keep creating, yet I don't feel like I am competing against her like I might in a regular classroom. It is true that the e-mailing of peers lets you open up in a way you might not in a traditional class."

Conclusion

The Saint Mary College and SkyLight Professional Development Master of Arts in Teaching program has two aspects that make it distinctive in distance education: the problem-based learning curriculum and the developing learning community. These two important components combine to make a program that is theory based, relevant, and honors teachers for their experience and abilities to support one another.

References

Evans, K. 2000. Managing the classroom environment for effective instruction course study guide. Arlington Heights, Ill.: SkyLight Professional Development.

Lazar, A. M. 1995. Who is studying in groups and why? *College Teaching* 43(2):61.

Senge, P. M. 1990. *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* New York: Doubleday Currency.

Hattie Gilmore is M.A.T. Program Director at Saint Mary College in Overland Park, Kansas.

Larry Gregg is Assistant Professor at Saint Mary College in Overland Park, Kansas.

Karen Evans is Academic Programs Manager at SkyLight Professional Development in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 10

Quest for Quality: Self-Study and Institutional Improvement

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Getting More Out of the Self-Study: Using Self-Study Outcomes to Aid in Strategic Planning

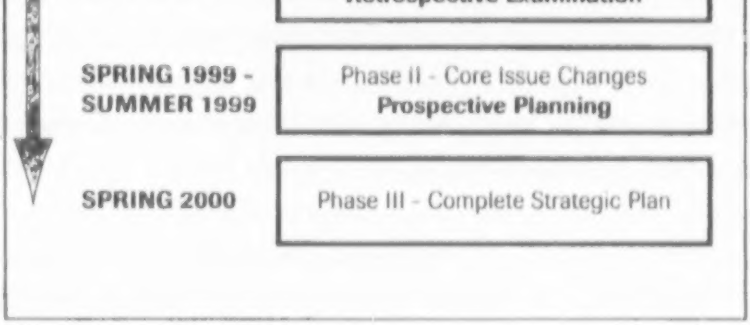
Timothy V. Franklin
Kevin J. G. Snider
Marilyn F. Schultz
Richard H. Wells

Introduction

Generally, college campuses approach self-study examinations and strategic planning activities as separate exercises. However, tremendous benefits can be derived from linking accreditation-related evaluation to the process of defining priorities for institutional effort. In late 1997, Indiana State University faced a need to update its strategic plan at the same time that it needed to prepare for its ten-year NCA reaccreditation visit. With the encouragement of the NCA, ISU became one of the first NCA institutions to use an "experimental" self-study process to inform its strategic planning efforts. The benefit of this approach has been a community better prepared to chart its future because it is better informed about its past and the issues it faces. Indeed, the strategic plan update built upon the process and findings of the self-study to connect current issues directly with future action. This paper provides the reader with an introduction to the process Indiana State used to link the two tasks, the perceived benefits, and lessons learned from this effort.

A Tale of Two Tasks: Linking Retrospective and Prospective

An important key to understanding this self-study's success is to recognize that the overall effort consisted of two stages. The first was an evaluative examination of the institution's past. The second undertaking looked prospectively at the institution's future. When done correctly, the retrospective examination needs to be conducted in a way that clarifies the issues, concepts, mission, and challenges that are likely to underpin the prospective, or strategic planning, effort at the institution. Likewise, optimal benefit is derived from developing mechanisms for ensuring that people involved in doing the work are kept on the tasks at hand in each of the stages. ISU's "experimental" self-study process considered both of these process matters.

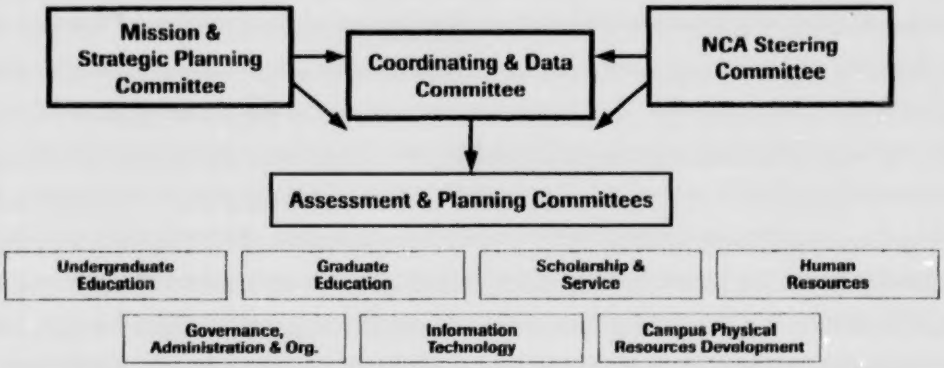

AUG 1997
Preliminary Strategic Planning Seminars
SEPT 1998
Phase I - Assessment & Planning
Retrospective Examination
SPRING 1999 - SUMMER 1999
Phase II - Core Issue Changes
Prospective Planning
SPRING 2000
Phase III - Complete Strategic Plan

Phase I—Retrospective Examination

One prerequisite for success in both self-study and strategic planning is the broad participation in the effort by the campus community. This was accomplished at ISU through the implementation of the committee structure shown to the right. The seven assessment and planning committees were formed according to functional areas anticipated to be foci during strategic planning. Each of these committees was comprised of faculty, administrators, and students from across the campus, resulting in more than 150 individuals participating in this self-study activity with the entire "experimental" process involving in excess of 250 individuals.

Direct coordination of the seven assessment and planning committees was provided by the Coordinating and Data Committee. This committee helped develop charges, gathered and provided data, and managed the daily activities of the self-study and strategic planning process, as well as leading with "experimental" process design. The Mission and Strategic Planning and NCA Steering Committees were comprised of administrative, faculty, staff, and student leaders to ensure that the process met the needs of both the NCA self-study and strategic planning activities.

PHASE I - Retrospective Examination


Mission & Strategic Planning Committee
Coordinating & Data Committee
NCA Steering Committee
Assessment & Planning Committees
Undergraduate Education
Graduate Education
Scholarship & Service
Human Resources
Governance, Administration & Org.
Information Technology
Campus Physical Resources Development

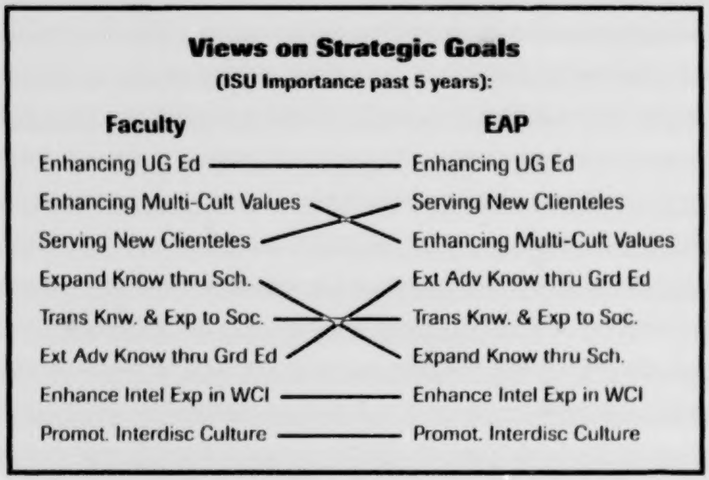
Providing direction for the seven committees formed a key component to ensure that self-study and planning were linked. Questions designed to allow each committee to examine the university's past also provided ways to consider the future. For example, one of the broad questions submitted to the committee on Undergraduate Education stated:

> What is present mix of undergraduate students (e.g., on/off campus, national/international, wide-ranging ability levels, racially and ethnically diverse) at ISU? How well are these students served? How well-suited are the University's programs, activities, and resources to serving this mix of students? What would be an appropriate vision with regard to the mix of undergraduate students we recruit, retain, and serve? What should be done to improve our ability to use centralized and decentralized processes to recruit and retain a desirable mix of students?

Each assessment and planning committee was provided several charges related to its self-study function that guided its evaluative review.

The Coordinating and Data Committee also established an On-line Data Pack thereby providing each committee with on-line, as well as hard copy, access to the data most likely needed to fulfill their charges. This effort made available, in a flexible form, a considerable body of institutional data, spared committees considerable research time, and supported the expectation for a "scholarly" review. As the charges were being developed for consideration by the assessment and planning committees, it became clear that new information would be required. In particular, information on faculty, staff, and administrative attitudes and perceptions about several areas of the university and its strategic direction was required to answer the charges as well as to explore areas of consensus. The methodology decided upon was a campus-wide questionnaire with follow-up focus groups to give depth on priority issues and constituencies. This research effort also provided an excellent opportunity to ask questions related to ISU's future. The ability to satisfy informational needs of both the NCA self-study and the strategic planning process with one multi-method survey approach proved extremely efficient and useful to both activities.

☐ Examples of the Past Informing the Future



Views on Strategic Goals

(ISU Importance past 5 years):

Faculty	**EAP**
Enhancing UG Ed	Enhancing UG Ed
Enhancing Multi-Cult Values	Serving New Clienteles
Serving New Clienteles	Enhancing Multi-Cult Values
Expand Know thru Sch.	Ext Adv Know thru Grd Ed
Trans Knw. & Exp to Soc.	Trans Knw. & Exp to Soc.
Ext Adv Know thru Grd Ed	Expand Know thru Sch.
Enhance Intel Exp in WCI	Enhance Intel Exp in WCI
Promot. Interdisc Culture	Promot. Interdisc Culture

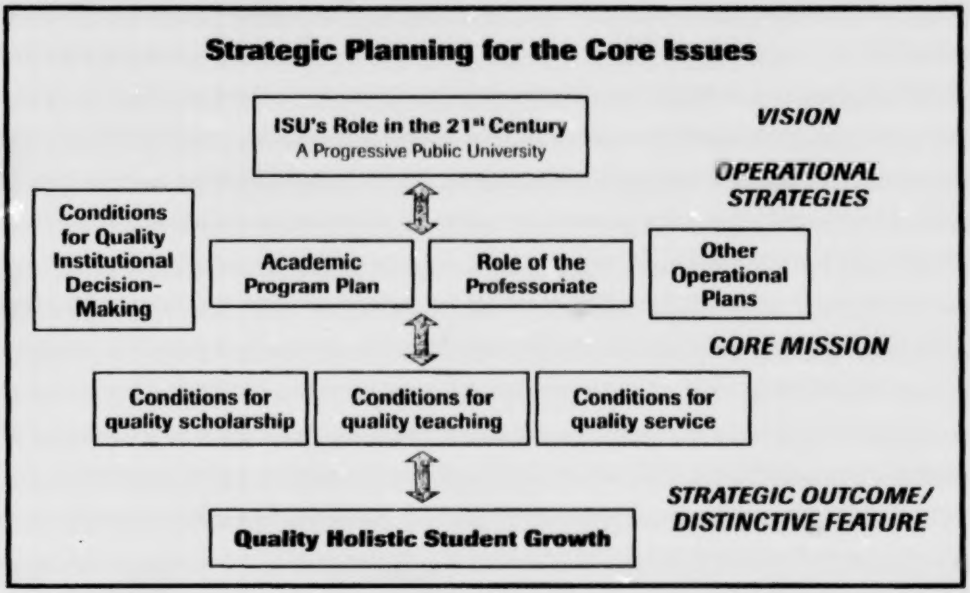
The survey functioned to dispel myths about ISU's culture and to illustrate consensus with regard to the community's perceptions about the mission and strategic direction of the institution. The table below ranks by importance institutional strategic goals, first by faculty and then by EAP (Executives, Administrators, Professionals). The rank order correlation illustrates that relative ranking about the importance of these goals over the past five years is similar between the two groups. When faculty and staff were asked to rank these goals in importance to ISU's future, an even closer result was found. This evidence clearly illustrated that both faculty and administrators were striving for the same goals as well as confirming undergraduate education as the primary goal of the university's past and future. Other findings about ISU's past that helped inform the future included:

- that faculty approve of ISU's educational scope
- a majority of faculty view long distance education as important to the institution
- a majority of faculty believed the institution's reward system could be better balanced
- technology is expected to become increasingly integrated into teaching

Overlapping Phase I with Phase II

Phases I and II overlapped during Spring Semester 1999. Planning-related charges and additional institutional data were introduced before the seven committees submitted final reports. Preliminary reports from the seven assessment and planning committees, submitted in January 1999, supplied a basis for focusing the retrospective evaluation in order to support effective planning. Several papers on topics such as the University's enrollment position, planning parameters, strategic positioning, as well as a new set of "common charges" for strategic planning were generated by the Coordinating and Data Committee after reviewing and discussing the preliminary committee reports. A consultant's report also provided credible information on peer comparisons regarding ISU's compensation structure, employee mix, and salary equity and competitiveness. This step in the self-study helped place the work of each assessment and planning committee within the broader context of the university. Hence, this proved to be an extremely useful step. Many campus constituencies were educated for the first time about ISU's strategic position, which proved to be another by-product to conducting self-study in the context of strategic planning. As a result of the subsequent information and dialogue, a large number of people were exposed for the first time to the larger strategic issues faced by higher education in general and Indiana State University in particular. The focus on applying this information to charting a course for the future alerted campus participants to the numerous complexities involved in issues such as the size and mix of employee groups in relation to salary and compensation or the impact of an overly broad program scope on faculty workload. This exercise in information exchange and negotiation proved valuable in gaining acceptance for common definitions with regard to several enduring institutional issues and gave credence to various strategic initiatives that had not been well understood previously.

Perhaps the most helpful outcome of the NCA self-study process was that it produced an accepted conceptual framework that offered a sense of priority within and between mission-related activities while supplying a continuity of institutional purpose. This concept orients the relationship between the institution's vision for the future, its tripartite core mission, and its most distinctive outcome with strategies for achieving each. This framework is portrayed below. Essentially, the self-study process helped clarify or reify ISU's vision of continuing to be a progressive public institution. The goal of the institution is to provide quality, holistic, student growth and development in a manner


Strategic Planning for the Core Issues
ISU's Role in the 21st Century
A Progressive Public University
VISION
OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES
Conditions for Quality Institutional Decision-Making
Academic Program Plan
Role of the Professoriate
Other Operational Plans
CORE MISSION
Conditions for quality scholarship
Conditions for quality teaching
Conditions for quality service
STRATEGIC OUTCOME/ DISTINCTIVE FEATURE
Quality Holistic Student Growth

that readies students for the life and professional contexts of their choosing. This goal is achieved through the pursuance of quality scholarship, teaching, and service, all of which form the mission of the institution. The operational strategies link the vision to the core mission, and ultimately, result in the strategic outcome of the institution. In addition to providing a blueprint for thinking about strategic planning, the self-study process also resulted in identifying the issues involved in each of these areas as well as possible steps needed for implementation.

Through the combination of emerging conceptual clarity, broad stakeholder involvement, scrutiny of ISU's persistent and difficult issues, a wealth of relevant data, and an emphasis on a scholarly discussion of the institutional challenges, an outcome occurred that was hoped for yet unexpected in the degree to which it transpired. Common problem definitions developed and became understood by campus constituencies. This permitted discussion to shift participants from talking past one another as they offered varying versions of what constituted the problem to potential solutions and implementation approaches. Because of the consensus that developed on strategic direction and primary issues and challenges, the strategic plan update became far more centered on implementation-level issues. Most importantly, the dynamic that developed during this overlap gave focus to the strategic planning process and those involved in the strategic planning phase were able to spend the bulk of their time determining how to resolve the now-defined issues and achieve these common goals.

Phase II—Prospective Examination

With Phase II, the ISU community began to turn toward contemplation of the institution's future. As discussed above, this prospective examination began with the development of the "common charges" and other information and overlapped the retrospective evaluation. The goal of this planning phase was to use a process that achieved an integrated strategy to strengthen the University. Strategy requires that multiple activities be done well and that these activities reinforce and support one another in order to produce a stronger institution with distinctive competitive advantages. However, after each chair and co-chair discussed the preliminary NCA planning committee reports with University and self-study leadership, it became apparent that Phase II needed to focus on several issues that cut across the functional foci of the seven committees, as well as overcoming the "silo" mentality of each. Concern developed that the segmented committee structure meant that each would continue to develop isolated solutions producing few cross-functional advantages. A second caution as Phase II began also developed around the tendency to be too inwardly focused on planning and failing to assess the environment. In addition to the Phase II planning parameters and discussions of driving forces, in August 1999, an External Stakeholders Conference brought together leaders from the state and community with ISU campus leaders to discuss ISU in relation to its environment.

The first step was to evaluate the structure used to conduct the self-study. It was clear that there was a need to reduce the number of individuals involved in the strategic planning phase. Many involved faculty and staff were anxious to ease their committee work in order to return to a focus on the classroom and their work. In addition, the nature of the work–reaching consensus and determining ways to synthesize resolutions for the identified issues–was better suited to a smaller group. However, the need to preserve broad involvement remained. The structural solution was to create a Combined Leadership Committee (CLC), consisting of the chairs of the assessment and planning committees, other leaders of the NCA/Strategic Planning process, and a few additions to form a representative group. This group of 35 met fairly often through the Summer and Fall of 1999 to discuss and refine the issues involved in the NCA document as well as to provide feedback on the recommended steps for implementation.

The result of these planning discussions was that the strategic issues identified in the self-study were reformed in the strategic plan to be an operational plan for achieving strategic goals. The Strategic Plan Update developed directly from the issues identified during the self-study. An intermediate step occurred when each of the planning issues identified in the NCA Report was pulled into a planning summary. This document organized the various issues and suggestions into themes that evolved into the four strategies listed below. The Combined Leadership Committee discussed this summary before the Strategic Plan Update was drafted.

In all, four main strategies developed for continuing to pursue the institution's strategic plan. The four strategies provide a short list of institutional priorities and are:

1. enhancing educational quality;
2. maintaining, expanding, and diversifying resources;
3. aligning resources with priorities; and
4. enhancing institutional decision making and governance.

Sixteen initiatives focused recommended institutional action steps around the four strategies. These initiatives included such topics as activating student learning; infusing teaching and the educational experience with technology; managing and developing university enrollments; planning and reviewing academic programs; determining and meeting human resource needs; and assessing institutional activities. The Strategic Plan Update and NCA Report were designed to be companion documents with a sleeve in the cover of the NCA Report providing storage for the Strategic Plan Update.

Benefits of this Approach

This two-pronged process resulted in a number of overall benefits.

- By combining the two efforts, efficiencies of effort were captured while still providing broad involvement by the campus community.
- The overlapping of Phase I with Phase II created a greater understanding and agreement about institutional issues.
- This consensus about the primary institutional challenges permitted dialogue to center, to a greater degree, on potential solutions and implementation strategies.
- The NCA self-study identified strategic issues and consensus developed around a framework that connected the vision, mission, and distinctive outcome to implementation strategies.
- Dialogue among campus stakeholders shifted from disagreement over defining problems and institutional direction to strategies to solve agreed-upon problems.
- As a result of being linked to an extensive, evaluative self-study, the strategic planning process was far less strategic in nature and far more focused on implementation issues than would normally be the case.
- The Strategic Plan Update's recommendations are augured by the wealth of information contained within the NCA Report.

Lessons Learned

The process produced a campus better informed of the external pressures facing the institution and helped to shift the political dialogue into an honest discussion of real issues. In addition, combining the two processes proved to be an efficient use of time. Yet, as with any experimental process, a lot was learned that may help future attempts to link the self-study. These include:

- This is a long-term project that requires pacing and planning. We would have benefited from a schedule that allowed one year for the self-study and one year for the strategic planning portion. Our strategic planning attempts were somewhat constrained by the deadline of the NCA visit. Had we been creating a new strategic plan instead of updating one, this might have dragged on too long, taxing the patience of the community and missing the NCA visit deadline.
- A related suggestion is to recognize that a few people will likely do most of the work. During our process, we tried to make the most likely producers co-chairs of the assessment and planning committees. In most cases, the chairs did the actual writing of the chapters and then were involved in the second phase as members of the Combined Leadership Committee.
- Most people on campuses will be uninformed about strategic issues facing the institution. Developing informational packets and providing data to address this issue will help ensure that everyone recognizes the fundamental issues at stake and helps place both the self-study and the strategic plan in perspective.
- Consider committee reports the beginning, not the end, of the writing process. We had anticipated that most of the committee reports would follow a proposed outline and address the issues we raised, making the compiling process relatively easy. We ended up with seven very different reports, each with foci not originally considered. As a result, many were completely reorganized, which meant a long process of collaboration and verification with committee members to ensure that a consensus emerged on the final document. The extent of work needed on committee reports was not anticipated and pushed our timeline back considerably. By the time a final draft had been completed, the document had gone through four major revision cycles.
- Ensure that there is plenty of time to distribute and discuss the report with the community. The knowledge that the NCA document was going to have a substantial impact on the strategic plan increased interest in the report. At initial meetings, various groups not directly involved in the project raised a few substantive concerns. By taking the time to work with these groups, the team was able to produce a document about which there was considerable consensus.
- Finally, it is important to recognize at the outset that, when choosing to do an "experimental" process, the work involves *designing* the process as well as doing the self-study. This has advantages, but also means that the responsibility and effort involved in this role must be planned for at the outset.

In sum, while this approach demands considerable investment to accomplish, the benefits far outweigh the costs. Indeed, using self-study outcomes to aid in strategic planning allows the institution to get more out of its self-study. While it is perhaps too early to be certain, there is an emerging sense that the process has strengthened ISU in many ways.

Timothy V. Franklin is Associate Vice President for Government Relations and Planning at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

Kevin J. G. Snider is Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Assessment Planning at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

Marilyn F. Schultz is Vice President for Planning and Budgets at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

Richard H. Wells is Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

Plan Implementation by Continuous and Very Public Performance Evaluation

William Cheek
James Baker

Introduction

The years 1992 through 1995 witnessed major changes at Southwest Missouri State University. The changes began with the 1992 NCA self-study and accelerated with the hiring of a new president in 1993. The first priority of the new administration was to develop a strategic plan to guide the university. With two years remaining before the November 1995 NCA site visit, the university's NCA Steering Committee decided to link the NCA self-study and the campus long-range planning process. This linkage resulted in a more coordinated effort, and, from existing evidence, a greater degree of success from both processes. These events led to profound changes in how the institution utilizes NCA self-study, long-range planning, and continuous improvement as major strategic assets.

The university's current long-range plan, *Welcoming the 21st Century*, ends in the year 2000. Planning has already begun on the next long-range plan, *Countdown to the SMSU Centennial*. In actuality, these are not two separate plans, but rather part of a continuous planning process. The planning process for *Countdown to the SMSU Centennial* is built around the existing long-range plan and the planning approach is to review, reevaluate, and revise that plan as necessary and desirable. The basis of the planning process is to sustain the best of what the university does in its commitment to develop educated persons. Unlike past practice at SMSU, there was a conscious effort to begin immediately preparing for the next (2005) NCA self-study and team visit.

We often hear of institutional planning efforts that, for a variety of reasons, are unsuccessful. We would like to tell a story of what we think is an example of successful planning and one that has continued to have widespread involvement and commitment. We think that the process outlined is applicable in many institutional settings

Previous Planning Efforts

Like other institutions of higher education, SMSU has engaged in long-range planning, sometimes successfully, but many times not. In the past, the campus culture at SMSU was not one oriented to long-range planning. As a consequence, many long-range plans had little impact because they were developed with limited input from the campus community, were not distributed widely to on- and off-campus constituent groups, had little or no relationship with budgeting, and had no clearly stated measures of performance. These efforts were generally ignored or at best endured.

There were several planning efforts in the years between the 1985 and 1995 NCA site visits. These included:

- a 1985 document describing a comprehensive planning process for the university,
- three different five year plans,
- three year academic program plans linking planning and budgeting for the 1986 through 1989 budget cycles,

- a series of resource allocation plans, and
- a 1993 response to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education's (CBHE) 24 "critical choice goals."

Only the latter document was a major part of present planning efforts.

One of the most significant reasons for the practice of not following even so-called strategic plans included the lack of an accepted and focused mission statement. Evaluation of past planning effort inadequacies revealed in the process of the 1995 NCA self-study provided a starting point for development of a widely discussed and accepted focused mission statement for the university, which in turn led to development of a very successful long-range plan, *Welcoming the 21st Century*.

NCA Self-Study: 1992–95

Between 1992-95, the SMSU system conducted self-studies at two of its campuses. One self-study was for initial separate accreditation of the SMSU-West Plains, an open enrollment, two-year campus. The other self-study was for the Springfield campus as part of its continuing accreditation effort. At the Springfield campus, the most recent North Central self-study began with the appointment of a campus coordinator and steering committee in the fall of 1992. The 16-member steering committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, used the first half of 1993 to plan the self-study with the task force membership and charges approved in October. An important goal was considerable campus involvement. To this end, more than 100 faculty, staff, and students served on the 13 task forces.

Thirteen task forces involving more than 100 people proved difficult to coordinate and in retrospect, a smaller number might have made the task easier. Fewer people, however, would have been counter to the goal of maximum participation. Summer months, when most faculty and students were off campus, were especially anxious times. To help keep things on track, at least one member of the steering committee served on each task force. Task forces met as often as necessary and disbanded as their work was completed. With only a few exceptions, deadlines were met. The steering committee met no less than monthly until the site team arrived in November 1995. Success of the self-study could not have occurred without active support of central administration and we were fortunate in receiving such strong support.

The self-study process developed the usual reports to faculty senate, top administrators, deans, and the student government association as well as open meetings that were often sparsely attended. Because we wanted to produce a document that would remain useful to the university beyond the team visit, neither the task force charges nor the self-study were based on the five Criteria for Accreditation. In addition to presentations and meetings, the NCA Steering Committee prepared an executive summary of the Self-Study Report and distributed it to every faculty and staff member, widely distributed it to students and to anyone who wanted a copy. Although somewhat difficult to access compared to the present Internet, the executive summary was also made available on the web. The executive summary of the 1995 self-study may be viewed at www.smsu.edu/campus/general/northce1.html.

The organizational structure of the self-study was relatively complex but it provided a mechanism for campus involvement. The NCA self-study process proved to be a taste of things to come in terms of "wide-spread involvement and communication" in institutional planning and evaluation efforts.

Welcoming the 21st Century: A Long Range Vision and Five-Year Plan

This quote, taken from the 1995 NCA Self-Study Report (page 31), captures the spirit and intent of the planning process on campus.

> A common complaint of any kind of master plan is that it often sits on a shelf and gathers dust once written. Whether a university's plan is used to improve the institution depends on a number of factors. For example, how and by whom was the plan developed? How feasible is it? What is the commitment of administration, staff, and faculty? Widespread involvement by a number of constituencies on and off-campus in developing the plan, an important feature of *Welcoming the 21st Century*, helps to bring about commitment. Results from surveys of faculty and staff as well as roundtable discussions of the institutional plan involving more than 300 people indicate its appropriateness. Periodic review and updates are necessary to keep any plan current. Procedures to do this are in place.

The spirit is to involve as many people as possible in developing a workable long-range plan and the intent is to implement that plan and to report on the success and failures during plan implementation.

The university's recent long-range plan has resulted in significant changes since 1995. These institutional changes have been by design, not chance. *Welcoming the 21st Century* was the product of a three year effort in response to the joint initiatives of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, the Board of Governors, and the university community to achieve three goals:

1. to sharpen the focus of the university mission and mandate by emphasizing the real and unique strengths of the university and of its location;
2. to increase standards and the quality of teaching and learning by adopting a selective admissions standard; and,
3. in the interest of students, taxpayers, and lawmakers, to operate the university's campuses and facilities in an efficient and systematic way.

Among the more significant changes resulting from *Welcoming the 21st Century* was the university receiving a legislatively mandated statewide mission in public affairs. The plan also resulted in:

- development of five campus-wide themes
- well articulated and measurable goals designed for quality improvement
- defined assessment based on a set of performance measures reported annually

Major accomplishments under the plan were:

- general education reform
- development of new academic programs based on institutional mission
- development of a successful enrollment management plan based on change from an open to selective admissions
- implementation of an information technology plan
- the linking of budgeting to planning and performance measures

SMSU takes seriously its obligation to measure progress toward stated goals and it reports those findings to all of its constituents or, for that matter, anyone who cares to read them. Accountability is viewed by the university as a lever for quality. *The Annual Report of Performance Measures: Implementing the Plan* is published each November. Each performance measure is assigned to a vice president who is responsible for assessing and reporting performance for that measure. At that time, the president publicly presents the performance measures report to the university's governing board and the report is made available to interested media and to the public. The report is posted on the SMSU web site www.smsu.edu/presast/PerformanceMeasures.html. The performance measures are essentially indicators designed to meet the short-term needs of accountability and the long-term needs for planning, priority setting, and budgeting. The NCA review process has become an integral part of this periodic measuring of performance and is also available on the SMSU web site.

Institutional Improvement Through Coordinated, Continuous, and Public Planning

The success of linking NCA review and university planning led SMSU's president, Dr. John Keiser, to establish the NCA Review Committee in 1997. The purpose of this standing committee is to conduct periodic reviews of the way the university is addressing concerns expressed by the NCA evaluation team at its 1995 site visit. The NCA review has become an integral part of the university's evaluation process and the committee's report is available for review on the SMSU web site. At Southwest Missouri State University, linking the NCA self-study and review, long-range planning, continuous program evaluation, budgeting based on planning, and performance evaluation has led to institutional change and improvement. Self-study is no longer viewed as an isolated two-year activity but a continuous and interrelated activity related to planning, budgeting, program change, and assessment.

The NCA Review Committee has completed two reviews of university progress in addressing concerns listed in the 1995 NCA team report. The findings of the reviews are presented to the President's Administrative Council and are published on the web www.smsu.edu/presasst/PerformanceMeasures/AppendixB.html. Of the six concerns expressed by the 1995 team, two are no longer issues and the other four, while remaining a concern for the foreseeable future, have experienced substantial improvement. General education reform, a concern in both the 1985 and 1995 team reports, has been implemented and the program is now in the first of a series of three-year assessments. The concern of inadequate library facilities is being addressed in the form of a $25 million renovation and expansion project. Ground breaking for the two-year project occurred in October of 1999.

The NCA Review Committee is also very much involved in ongoing long-range planning efforts and coordinates its activities with the University Planning Advisory Council. The NCA Review Committee and UPAC are committed to continuous planning–interrelated and based on measurable goals–not activities masquerading as planning. The primary goal of these coordinated and continuing planning efforts is institutional improvement. The concept is simple; the difficulty lies in the execution. At SMSU, we believe we have made a solid start in this effort. The integration of the NCA self-study, institutional planning, and performance review has and will continue to assist in meeting the university's continuous improvement goals.

The planning process for *Countdown to the SMSU Centennial* demonstrates the administration's approach to planning, namely the reliance on objective data from performance measures and the desire to solicit the best thoughts and ideas from as many individuals and constituent groups as possible. The eighteen-month planning process began in January 1999 and concludes in June 2000. At the beginning of the planning process, UPAC took several steps to ensure the broadest possible participation in developing the university's long-range plan. The first step was to articulate the planning approach and process to be followed in developing the plan and making sure that students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the university were aware of the plan and that they were encouraged to actively participate in developing the plan.

The UPAC planning process utilized the existing university committee structure to the greatest extent possible and was guided by four objectives: 1) establish the planning process to be followed in developing the new long-range plan; 2) establish a calendar to develop and implement the new plan; 3) align the new plan with Coordinating Board for Higher Education planning, North Central Association planning, and with college and departmental level planning; and, 4) ensure broad-based participation of students, faculty and staff in the planning process. Operating guidelines directing the planning process included: 1) the University Planning and Advisory Council serving as the steering committee responsible for overall development of the plan; 2) University and Planning Advisory Council constituent groups (Staff Advisory Council, Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Administrative Council, and NCA Review Committee) promote wide scale involvement in the planning process within their own constituent groups; 3) the timeline to develop the plan is January 1999 to June 2000; 4) the Office of University Relations will be responsible for preparation/publication of the final plan; and, 5) implementation date of the new plan is July 1, 2000.

From the beginning, UPAC focused on establishing multiple communication channels to encourage broad-based participation in the planning effort. On January 7, 1999, President Keiser outlined the upcoming planning process in a major speech to faculty and staff. His speech was followed up by a campus newsletter article, a student newspaper article that provided further detail of the planning process and was posted on the SMSU web site. The SMSU web site has provided a major tool for UPAC in collecting input and feedback on the plan. Electronic forms and e-mail have been used to collect information. In addition, written responses from individuals, standing university committees, and a variety of university constituent groups have been encouraged. The result of these efforts has been a high level of participation. As of January 2000, UPAC had met 12 times and three public hearings had been held. By the time the plan takes affect in July, there will have been an additional three UPAC meetings and another three public hearings. It is expected that by the time the planning process is completed that at least 1,000 people will have actively participated in the planning or have attended one or more of the public hearings.

Lessons Learned

What have we learned from the efforts of the past seven years? Most of the lessons learned are neither unique nor new. They are, however, crucial to successful planning efforts.

- Articulating a focused mission statement is fundamental. The mission statement must have broad-based acceptance as well as commitment from central administration.
- Broad-based participation is necessary to ensure that constituents feel they are listened to.

- Technologies, such as web sites, increase participation and make the process much more public.
- Budgeting and program decisions need to be tied to the plan.
- Linking institutional planning activities together is not only desirable but possible.

And, of importance to many institutions conducting accreditation self-studies–

- It is not necessary to wait until two years before the site team visit to begin your self-study.

Concluding Remarks

The primary goal of the university's coordinated and continuing planning efforts is institutional improvement. The integration of the NCA self-study process, institutional planning process, and performance review has and will continue to assist the university's continuous improvement goals. Of course, undergirding any effort is the need for involvement and buy-in of the university community and there have been mixed reviews of this buy-in by some constituents. The administration has, however, demonstrated to faculty and staff that accountability should be viewed as a way of documenting improvement, not as a form of internal or external harassment. The ultimate measure for the effectiveness of a planning process is the degree to which the resultant plan is followed and implemented. There is no denying that the goals set out in *Welcoming the 21st Century* were implemented. We are very optimistic that in the year 2005 we will continue improving the process started more than a decade before and once again be able to build on what has proven to be a very successful long-range plan.

References

Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU). *Annual performance measures: Implementing the plan.* www.smsu.edu/presast/PerformanceMeasures.html.

——. *Countdown to the centennial: A long-range vision and six-year plan (2000-2006).* In progress. www.smsu.edu/countdown.

——. *Developing new dimensions: A decade of change.* 1995. Report prepared for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

——. *Developing new dimensions: A decade of change.* 1995. Executive Summary. North Central Association Self-Study Report. www.smsu.edu/campus/general/northce1.html.

——. *Welcoming the 21st century: A long-range vision and five-year plan (1995-2000).* 1995. www.smsu.edu/21cent/contents.html.

William Cheek is Associate Dean, Natural and Applied Science, at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield.

James Baker is Executive Assistant to the President at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield.

The Quest for Quality: Using the Self-Study Process to Connect Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Charles S. Weiner
Douglas N. McMillan

Background

Change does not occur easily, or quickly. At times, change moves very slowly, and not without some growing pains. Change shows itself in many ways. Ways that many are not ready for. At Southeastern, change began after the 1993 NCA comprehensive visit. The NCA team presented Southeastern with an opportunity to begin changing from a culture that was traditionally very stability-oriented to a culture that would be more dynamic and willing to embrace change.

Historically, Southeastern was an institution where authority, power, decision making, and influence almost exclusively resided within the administrative structure. The focus of the revitalization process since the 1993 NCA team visit has been to attempt to achieve a sharing of power and influence between the administration and the faculty.

The opportunity provided by the focused visit created the opening for the University to examine itself and make those changes that were necessary to move forward and meet the NCA mandate for shared-governance. These changes have led to new roles, new relationships, and a new structure within the organization. However, as in any change process, the University has experienced significant strain as the old culture was phased out and the new culture initiated.

The self-study process itself began this transition with the selection of a Self-Study Steering Committee comprised solely of faculty members. The role of the administrators was one of consultants to the self-study team. This in itself represented a major shift in the organizational structure of the University. New faculty roles, relationships, and functions had to be defined, developed, and implemented within the Steering Committee. Previous steering committees had acted primarily as historians or reporters. However, this self-study demanded that the Steering Committee also analyze the 1993 team report as well as the state of the institution. This required faculty to take a critical look at where the institution was and how it could begin to make improvements. Obviously the self-study process forced the members of the self-study team to make the transition from a historically passive role to a much more active evaluative role. Some things that emerged from this transition included greater faculty empowerment and ownership of the process and ultimately the institution. We had built an organizational system of fragmented functions such as program review, strategic planning, and assessment, which largely operated in a disconnected manner from each other. Related to this, many faculty viewed these functions as being "forced" on them by some perceived external organization such as NCA or other external sources. Once we had clearly accepted the fragmentation that existed, the Steering Committee began to function as the catalyst for change, which as already was mentioned, was a unique role for faculty to take in the culture.

As is the case with all evolutionary processes, the change occurred at an uneven rate. For example, prior to 1995, progress and change were painfully slow as the institution began to grapple with some of the basic changes that needed to occur. Solutions had to be proposed and discussed, and consensus had to be reached. After consensus was reached, basic modification of the foundation of governance had to begin: such as putting the Faculty Senate in an oversight role. However, as the institution began to make some of the foundational adjustments, change began to occur at a faster pace. Not only was the rate of change uneven since the last 1993 comprehensive visit, but also at times there was a somewhat chaotic quality to the process itself. For example, when one election was required to give the Faculty Senate an oversight function, another election was then required to define what exactly oversight meant. It is certain that at times faculty and administrators alike sometimes wondered where they were going, and whether or not they were going to like it when they got there. However, even with the unevenness of progress and the occasional chaotic aspects of the process (which we believe is very much a part of any evolutionary process), a new pattern began to emerge within the institution which prior to the 1993 comprehensive visit had not been a part of the organizational culture. The most significant part of this whole process was that faculty members were initiating and enacting change.

Role of the Steering Committee In the Assessment Process

The Self-Study Steering Committee began the change process by identifying and categorizing all of the 1993 NCA Team's concerns relevant to assessment. Each of these concerns was then operationally defined as an institutional objective and was developed as follows:

The University will:

1. increase linkage of assessment with program review;
2. specify and document the ways in which degree programs use assessment information to change curricula and enhance program quality;
3. begin development of systematic evaluation of graduates by employers in an effort to enhance degree programs;
4. review outcome statements for all academic programs and modify for appropriateness, usefulness, and measurability;
5. increase utilization of assessment feedback to improve the quality of instruction for students;
6. continuously evaluate all measures used by degree programs to assess student performance and program quality.

The use of these institutional objectives in the self-study process gave the Steering Committee direction and set the integration process in motion. These also gave clear standards of evaluation that were used later in the self-study process.

Assessment

During Fall 1996 the North Central Steering Committee recommended to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate that the Institutional Research and Planning Committee (IRP) begin to take responsibility for the major assessment program and program review functions. The NCA Steering Committee further recommended that the membership of the new committee be modified to reflect greater faculty membership and its mission statement amended to include active management of the assessment and program review process. The function statement would include annual review of all departmental assessment plans and a process for providing feedback to departments regarding the quality of assessment activities and assessment reports.

The assessment process had, in the past, been monitored and facilitated by the Institutional Research and Planning Committee. These past three years have seen the growth of assessment and its move from an administrative function to a total University wide program. One of the more dramatic changes that occurred during the NCA Self-Study process was that the Institutional Research and Planning Committee went through a metamorphosis. The name was changed to reflect the Committee's function: Institutional Research and Assessment Committee (IRAC). The administrator (Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs) in charge of this committee was replaced by a senior faculty member. And beginning with the 1997-98 academic year, the IRAC began the transition to become the steering committee in charge of the assessment program. This was in keeping with the function statement that was revised by the Faculty Senate. As mentioned earlier, the IRAC had for many years shared the responsibility for assessment with the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Also in line with this task, the North Central Steering committee requested that the IRAC assess several key issues with respect to the current state of assessment and program review at Southeastern.

As a first step, the IRAC evaluated the Program Outcomes Assessment Plans of each department. We believed this was a critical step in the process that needed to be addressed if our assessment and program review activities were to continue to move forward. As a second step, the North Central Steering Committee decided that data needed to be gathered to get a clearer picture of our current assessment and program review initiatives. The charge to the IRAC was to collect, collate, report, and disseminate data over the following six questions.

1. What is the current state of assessment and program review at Southeastern at the Department, School, and University levels?
2. How are assessment and program review linked to improved quality and to enhancing the curriculum at all levels?
3. To what degree are academic departments actively committed to the assessment and program review process?
4. To what degree are departments using the assessment and program review process to make changes in the curriculum and enhance the quality of educational offerings?
5. To what degree is the IRAC beginning to provide feedback and engage in active management of the assessment process?
6. What is the specific plan and anticipated timeline for correcting any current problems in the assessment and program review process?

The NCA Steering Committee, in a memo, asked that the report from the IRAC be both descriptive and analytical in tone. More specifically, where possible, descriptive statements should be supported by data. Because this had never been undertaken before by faculty members at Southeastern, the initial report prepared by the IRAC was not adequate. What the NCA Steering Committee discovered was that the IRAC was a little flustered as to exactly what was wanted. Also, in effect, because of the transition, the IRAC was reticent in asking the schools and departments for the information that was needed. At Southeastern, in the past, work that was inadequate was rewritten by administrators. As part of the change process and the growing pains that go with it, the faculty had to comprehend that they were responsible for this report and that no administrator would be rewriting this for them. The initial IRAC report was critiqued and handed back to the chair of the IRAC with explicit instructions as to what was needed and wanted by the North Central Steering Committee.

Because of the how the governance process was evolving, the Steering Committee realized that it had to be, in the beginning phase of this transition, the catalyst for change. The responsibility rested with the Steering Committee to focus our fellow faculty members to accept their role in this process. In other words, what they did and how they did it would reflect upon all of the faculty at Southeastern. The following quote is taken directly from a memo written to the chair of the IRAC from the NCA Steering Committee:

> It is important for the faculty at Southeastern to understand that it has the responsibility for writing the Self-Study Report for the North Central Association's focused visit. The North Central Steering Committee is comprised solely of faculty members. There are no administrators on this committee. How well we do will reflect directly upon us, the faculty. The IRAC, as well as other committees, have to write reports that look and sound like professional educators wrote them. All avenues of the questions asked need to be explored, documented, and answered in their entirety. Consequently, the following recommendations for a revised report from the IRAC are given....

With the guidance and the help of the Steering Committee members, the IRAC's final report was quoted extensively in the Self-Study Report.

From the IRAC report eight recommendation were put forth toward getting this committee the overall responsibility that it needed to carry out the new mandate of its mission. These recommendations were:

1. That the overall accountability for assessment and accreditation be established at the University and School levels.
2. That the IRAC is responsible for the oversight of all assessment activities on and off-campus.
3. That there needs to be a more readily identifiable relationship between the institutional mission and objectives and the specific objectives of individual departments, programs, and program review.

4. That Departments will make the commitment to ongoing assessment and use assessment as the linkage for budgeting and curricular planning.
5. That Southeastern will make assessment plans and results widely available to internal and external constituencies.
6. That the Faculty Senate will be requested to direct the Committee on Committees to review duplication of assessment activities.
7. That the IRAC will continue to assist in the refinement of departmental usage of national exams and appropriate exit-level instruments in assessing student learning and curricular changes to increase student achievement.
8. That each Department Outcomes Assessment Report will include an expanded statement of purpose/objectives, intended outcomes, assessment criteria and procedures, and an implementation strategy.

These eight recommendations were presented at the first ever Forum for Shared Governance. The recommendations were approved, and since that time the IRAC and the University have been working together to get them implemented. Timelines for implementation of these recommendation were delineated in the report. As the evolution proceeds toward shared governance on this campus, most of the eight recommendations are in various stages of compliance. The IRAC is now responsible for the oversight of all assessment activities on campus; and recommendation number four has been used successfully in developing a campus wide budget as departments have been asked for their input and recommendations. Recommendation seven has been submitted to the Faculty Senate and is currently under review. It is expected that the Faculty Senate will submit recommendations concerning recommendation seven within the year. The Departmental Outcomes Assessment Reports are being reviewed at this time with the intention of developing a format that will further encourage the development of the assessment culture within academic departments. As can be seen from the progress on these recommendations the evolutionary process of change is proceeding within the organization.

Summary and Conclusion

Where is Southeastern in the area of assessment as it moves into the 21st century? As uneven as the process has been, and as difficult as it has been for some to make the transition, Southeastern continues to pursue a model of faculty participation. The IRAC is the committee that evaluates assessment at Southeastern. The IRAC is the committee that coordinates the diverse NCA requirements regarding assessment. Weakness occurs, and the process breaks down somewhat where the IRAC is to be the change agent within the faculty and organizational culture. There are still members of this committee who are hesitant to go against the idiosyncratic culture that was in place before the 1998 focused visit. As with any type of change, the IRAC needs to be more aware of its new role. It needs to make the transition from being passive to a mature aggressiveness that gets everybody at the University on the same page with regard to assessment. The North Central Steering Committee steered the IRAC through Level One, and most of Level Two of North Central's Levels of Implementation for assessment. With the focused visit completed and the NCA Steering Committee having done its job, the responsibility to attain Level Three of implementation for assessment now rests within the Institutional Research and Assessment Committee.

This was the final role of the NCA Steering Committee; to exert the IRAC to change from a passive participant in the governance process to a much more active participant. Today, the IRAC continues to move forward, but members have been slow to engage in their new function. Was this resistance to be expected, maybe even predicted given the difficult task of convincing fellow faculty members to risk change to revitalize the culture? As Greenberg and Baron (1993) stated:

> Change rarely occurs easily...If it is often difficult to change our own behavior in a specific area of life, imagine how difficult it may be to alter the culture the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, expectancies of an entire organization. This daunting task has caused many...to throw their hands up in despair, as history and established practices work to defeat their efforts to produce desirable change....

Charles S. Weiner is Associate Professor of Education at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant.

Douglas N. McMillan is Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant.

The Three E's– Evolution, Empowerment, and Excitement: Results of the Commission's Self-Study Process at Tulsa Community College

John T. Kontogianes
Cheryl Hughes

Introduction

The self-study process at Tulsa Community College (TCC) has ushered in an era of tremendous excitement for the institution. The involvement of more than one hundred fifty faculty and staff with the self-study committee created an atmosphere of empowerment that is being felt by all constituents. From students to regents, the entire college community was involved in the process in some way. The validation of the findings of the self-study committee by the evaluation team is testimony to the honesty and seriousness with which the self-study was conducted. The *TCC Institutional Self-Study Report* is and will continue to be the primary platform for institutional improvement through TCC's continued evolution in the years to come as a higher education institution of the highest quality.

Evolution

In 1970, Tulsa, Oklahoma–with a population of approximately 500,000 (1970 SMSA)–did not have a publicly supported institution of higher education. The nearest accesses to publicly supported higher education were a comprehensive university and a regional university each approximately two hours away by automobile on two lane roads. The establishment of Tulsa Community College by the Oklahoma State Legislature in 1970 gave the residents of the Tulsa area their first contact with courses and degree programs at a cost that had been previously denied them. Until Tulsa Community College (then Tulsa Junior College) opened its doors in the fall of 1970, Tulsa was one of the largest cities in the United States without public higher education facilities.

The college experienced an average growth of approximately 1,000 students annually for its first twenty years of existence. Enrollments reached an all-time high of more than 20,000 in credit programs and approximately 4,000 in non-credit, continuing education programs in the early 1990's. This past decade has seen a stabilization, if not a slight decline, in credit enrollments. In the fall semester of 1999, the enrollment exceeded 19,000 students in credit programs and 5,000 students in non-credit courses. The decline has been in technical-occupational programs and principally in the working population between the ages of twenty-five and forty. The Tulsa economic conditions during the past decade have reflected low unemployment–approximately three percent–which is having an effect on the enrollments. In addition, there has been a proliferation of upper-division baccalaureate programs in the Tulsa community, which are attracting current students and graduates who in the past might have re-enrolled at the college instead of leaving the area to attend institutions in Oklahoma or out of state to complete a degree.

Tulsa Community College is now a four-campus, metropolitan community college with a central conference and administrative headquarters that has strong community and state support. Throughout the history of the institution, all bond issues have passed. They provide an important local source of supplementary revenue to the student and state revenues derived by the institution. The overwhelming support of the citizens of Tulsa in the passage of these revenue bonds attests to the college's positive image of quality and integrity. Presently the college is an institution of considerable organizational complexity that has been affected significantly by rapid growth and expansion of programs, services, and physical infrastructure. Communication has become one of TCC's biggest challenges. The self-study process helped identify and confirm this concern and provided insight for improvement.

Empowerment

The process of having one hundred fifty faculty, staff, and administrators examine every aspect of the life of the institution created an atmosphere of empowerment. Even those who did not work directly on the tasks of the committee were affected by the work of those formally appointed to the group. During 1994 and 1995 the college developed its *Strategic Vision*, a document that serves as the foundation for developing college goals and objectives. The all-volunteer committee of faculty, staff, and students developed a plan that is short of a strategic plan, but more than an institutional vision. The *Strategic Vision* provides a flexible platform for addressing important teaching and learning issues of the institution. The successful experience with an all-volunteer strategic vision committee led the co-chairs of the self-study committee to believe that an all-volunteer approach to recruiting committee members would work as well. The co-chairs selected ten individuals, pairing one faculty with one administrator, to co-chair five committees corresponding to the five NCA criteria for evaluation. These co-chairs were instructed to organize their committees in any way they wished and were asked to select their subcommittee members from the large pool of volunteers. Twenty-one subcommittees were formed with membership from all college locations.

The first feeling of empowerment came when the president of the college pledged to make the *Institutional Self-Study Report* and the *NCA Evaluation Team Report* the blueprints for institutional change. He also wanted the self-study co-chairs to know that he did not wish to influence the investigation or writing of the report, except to review the document for accuracy of fact. The president was and continues to be true to his word. Without that commitment the changes that are now evolving at the institution and the growing feeling of empowerment would not be taking place.

Another instance of empowerment also came early in the self-examination process. The subcommittee for NCA's criterion on integrity chose to do a climate survey to measure the attitudes of all college employees with respect to the general atmosphere of employment at the institution. The committee decided to use a nationally-normed climate survey that was distributed to all college employees. Feeling that this survey alone could not adequately measure the depth and breadth of some of the more difficult human relations and communication issues of the college, the committee decided to construct an internal climate survey that focused specifically on the more challenging issues of integrity. The results of both surveys were used in the *Institutional Self-Study Report* and openly displayed for all employees. Critical, anonymous, open-ended responses were also displayed in the resource room and no attempt was made to camouflage or discard the results. The willingness of the institution to talk openly about controversial issues and engage faculty, staff, and students in continued dialogue about important issues and topics that affect their lives at the college has created a distinct feeling that everyone's opinion is valued and must be heard.

A third instance of empowerment occurred when a subcommittee on governance at the institution recommended that faculty representatives meet directly with the Tulsa Community College Board of Regents. The feeling among many faculty was that the college's board of regents was not directly accessible to them. Even though throughout its history the college has always involved its constituents in developing policy, in response to this particular concern the president has increased the opportunity for direct contact between members of the TCC Board of Regents and TCC Faculty Association representatives. This has been accomplished by his willingness to schedule meetings between representatives of both groups at the request of faculty to discuss openly important goals and issues such as governance, compensation, staff development, marketing, and technology implementation. This has resulted in a feeling of confidence on the part of the faculty that their participation in the decision making process will be respected and accommodated.

A recommendation of the evaluation team to develop an implementation plan for the college's *Strategic Vision* has resulted in the strengthening of the planning process. A committee began working on the implementation plan during the self-study process, but the advice of the evaluation team has given the committee members insight into a more systematic approach. The committee has identified time lines, responsible parties, evaluation methods, and strategies for changes and improvements that will result from what is learned in the planning process.

Excitement

The atmosphere at Tulsa Community College as a result of the self-study process and evaluation team's visit is one of enthusiasm and optimism. The NCA evaluation team not only found the college well prepared for its on-site evaluation for continued accreditation, but also found a college that had addressed the major concerns raised in previous visits. The team found a college with high morale in all its constituencies, and a college with sound resources–human, financial, and physical–dedicated to maintaining its reputation for educational excellence.

The excitement generated by the self-study process and team visit is a product of every employee's understanding that the process has yielded excellent information and recommendations that will result in improvement of the institution. The immediate formation of committees to review general education goals, to reevaluate the assessment process, and to search for future avenues for faculty and staff empowerment, has created a positive atmosphere of cooperation. The college's operational paradigm is evolving into one of more openly accessible information, shared governance, and participatory decision making.

The commitment to change the short term planning process to one that is directly affected by the institution's assessment plan has given rise to a sense of purpose that the findings gained through the assessment process will truly shape institutional and program improvements. The work of faculty in this endeavor is being given special support.

The implementation of a new technological data processing system has also produced the expectation that the communication challenges will be met. The new data-sharing system will foster a systematized approach to several college operations including student services, financial aid, human resources, registration, accounting, purchasing, budgeting, and records management. These new systems are being awaited with great anticipation because they will increase the information-sharing capability across the campuses and with the central administration.

Summary

Throughout its *Strategic Vision,* college catalogs, publications, and other public and internal documents, Tulsa Community Colleges emphasizes its primary reason for being–teaching and learning. The entire self-study process was undertaken with this principal institutional focus in mind. The *NCA Evaluation Team Report* lauded the committee organization, the broad college participation, and the documentation that served as evidence of this commitment to the teaching/learning process. With the plans to use the *Institutional Self-Study Report* and the *NCA Evaluation Team Report* as foundations for improvement, the probability of sustaining the excitement concerning the positive changes in the institution through faculty and staff empowerment in the future evolution of the college remains high.

John T. Kontogianes is Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Cheryl Hughes is Professor of Humanities and Religion, Metro Campus, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION, THE COMMISSION AND A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 11

Coordinating the Self-Study Process

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Getting Started

Diane McNeilly
Norman Jenkins

The primary purpose of this self-study mentoring session will be to help colleagues beginning the process to focus not only on the requirements of the NCA self-study but on the greater benefit of institutional renewal, ownership, and pride that can come from a well-planned self-study. Kishwaukee College's self-study was used to bring the campus closer together through many communication devices in an attempt to involve every employee in the process. The college believes that through the self-study, many employees gained a greater understanding of the college and thus became more invested in the mission and goals of the college. It was a long, labor-intense experience with very positive results for individuals and for the institution.

The process must begin with appropriate support from the top administrators. This support plus a commitment to open communication throughout the process are essential to maintaining the focus of the self-study and to using the study as an impetus to positive institutional change.

Role of the President

As the chief executive officer of the institution, the president must play a key supportive role in the self-study process if the process is to serve as a vehicle for institutional advancement. The operative word here is *supportive*. This is not to say that the president should be a controller of the process; in fact, every effort should be made to ensure that this is not the perception of the CEO's role. Rather, the president should take the lead in emphasizing that the process itself will be used for institutional advancement, for the establishment of new or modified institutional goals, for the enhancement of collegiality on the campus, and for purposes of enhanced communication and the understanding of unit roles across the campus community.

The president must also ensure that the college's governing board fully understands the purposes of the self-study process as defined both by the institution and by the North Central Association. Not only must the president ensure that the Board understands the purposes, but the CEO must also ensure that the governing body accepts and supports the institutional concept of positive change that is expected to result from the activities associated with the process. The Board must be willing to accept and incorporate positive changes that may result, including changes in the basic mission statement of the college or in the institutional goals of the college they govern. In short, the Board must buy into a concept of collegiality in which all segments of the college will have the opportunity to provide real and significant input into the future directions of the institution.

The president must also play a key role in the selection of the self-study chair and in ensuring that the chair has the necessary support and authority to carry out the multiplicity of roles involved in this key position. The president must be willing to delegate the necessary authority for the advancement of the self-study process to the self-study chair. At the same time, the process of institutional advancement is best served if the CEO serves as a member of the self-study steering committee. The president's role on this committee is to be supportive of the chair and of the process and to provide answers and decisions as necessary during steering committee deliberations. The president must make every effort in his/her role as committee member not to be an intimidating factor for the chair or members of the steering committee as they do their work. All members of the steering committee, including the president, must be viewed as equal partners under the leadership and guidance of the steering committee chair.

Role of the Self-Study Chair

The self-study chair will function in many roles during this important process. Three of the most important functions are educator, organizer, and facilitator. To prepare for the process, the chair will need to educate him or herself about the NCA process and requirements by studying the NCA *Handbook* and attending the NCA Annual Meeting. Reading papers from past NCA conferences is also very useful in developing a sense of what is expected from this process. The chair will often be called upon to make presentations to the NCA committees or other stakeholders to explain requirements, procedures, and perhaps most importantly the purpose of this self-reflection activity. As educator, the chair actually sets the stage for most other stakeholders in this process. Through presentations, the campus community can come to understand the process as one of an opportunity for institutional renewal or, conversely, merely as fulfillment of a requirement for an external agency.

The chair will also function as chief organizer of these efforts. This means that he or she will remind committees of deadlines for various activities. Throughout the process, it is the chair who becomes aware of changes that need to be made in the timeline to accommodate any unforeseen challenge in collecting data or completing complex writing of some section of the document. It is the chair's responsibility to make recommendations to the steering committee about adjusting the timelines. Kishwaukee College's experience with making these changes was extremely positive. The college had two very complex chapters that required extensions of time to develop their draft copies. While these modifications required that the process be moved back somewhat, the time was recaptured later in the process when two other sections fell into place in less than the time allotted.

The role that is probably most appreciated by those working on the document is that of facilitator. The self-study chair sometimes needs to meet with committees that are experiencing difficulties in obtaining information, settling differences of opinion between committee members, determining how to organize the data that they have collected, or determining what the NCA is requiring or desiring in the section. Kishwaukee found that often times, either the steering committee chair or steering committee members were aware of additional campus resources that could be used for a particular section, and the information was provided by the chair to the appropriate subcommittee chair.

One practice that proved to be extremely helpful in facilitating Kishwaukee's self-study process was for the steering committee members to brainstorm on sources of information for each section of the study. This brainstorming occurred after the general content of the chapter had been discussed by the steering committee and before any meetings of the subcommittee had begun. The subcommittee chair then worked with the self-study chair to obtain the available information prior to any scheduled subcommittee meeting. Because of the campus wide representation on the steering committee, most campus sources of information were identified early in the process and assistance both in obtaining the information and in organizing it into a useful format were possible prior to the subcommittee beginning their work.

Communication

Good communication is always a very important factor in completing any project. This is especially true when the NCA self-study process is seen as an impetus for change at the institution. The employees at the college need to understand the process–its importance, implications, and findings. Communication can occur in a variety of ways and every means necessary should be employed.

Kishwaukee College used regularly scheduled employee meetings to make short presentations, obtain input, and answer questions throughout the process. The college also published periodic newsletters that explained some part of the process. These newsletter were sent to all full and part-time employees and to members of the Board of Trustees. Later in the process information meetings were required of all college employees to prepare employees for the visit and to share the self-study findings with the campus community.

Additional communication devices included the writing of minutes for all monthly meetings of the steering committee. Subcommittees kept meeting notes as well and sent copies to the self-study chair. The college also scheduled regular progress reports from subcommittees for each steering committee meeting. These reports benefited everyone in the process as everyone could brainstorm on new challenges and often could see duplication of efforts that could be addressed. Communication about the process–the importance of the process and the results–is and was everyone's job.

Maintaining Focus

If the self-study process is to advance along the timelines that have been established, an appropriate focus must be maintained by both the steering committee and all the various subcommittees involved. Focus can best be maintained if the process and campus goals, at the outset, are clearly outlined and communicated to everyone at the institution.

Once the process goals become accepted institution-wide, it then becomes the task of the steering committee chair and members of the committee to see to it that all work surrounding the self-study is devoted to achieving the established goals. Side issues or individual agendas must be set aside and left for another time and venue. All should remember that the self-study is being conducted not only for purposes of continued accreditation but also for the primary purpose of institutional advancement. Both can be best attained if timelines are adhered to and focus is maintained.

To advance the institution, the chair and steering committee must make certain that the self-study goals are being achieved. Kishwaukee College wanted the self-study to be a vehicle of communication for the next several years. It therefore became important to include enough data in the document to understand the conclusions if one were reading the document as a new employee. For that reason, it was often decided to leave in material that the evaluators may not have needed in order to benefit campus stakeholders in the future. Another goal the college had in writing the document was to demonstrate that it was walking-the-walk of continuous quality improvement. For that reason, this theme is carried throughout the self-study document.

Kishwaukee's original goals of communication, commitment, collaboration, and credibility were promoted by the steering committee not only during the process but throughout the written document. The college decided early on to make the self-study a process that would advance the institution in four very specific ways, and in the end this was accomplished.

Maintaining Flexibility

Flexibility in the self-study process is most directly related to the time that has been allotted to complete the process, the personality of the self-study chair, and the general approach that the college is taking in writing the self-study. In Kishwaukee's case, three years were allotted to complete the self-study, and most of the designated time was used to study, evaluate, and write various sections of the self-study. While the college's initial timeline called for an NCA visit in the late spring of 1999, the NCA decided to visit the campus in January of 1999. This shortened the proposed schedule by three months. Between the requests from two subcommittees for additional time to develop their draft copies and the earlier visitation date, Kishwaukee made modifications of about five months in the original time schedule. These necessary changes were possible because we had planned for the recommended time period of three years. Plenty of time was available to modify the schedule as needed.

One additional benefit of the three year time period was the opportunity to add new activities to the original timeline. At some point, the steering committee determined that it would be useful to conduct a survey of all campus stakeholders regarding some preliminary findings and to request initial input regarding the content of the sections on campus planning and integrity. The college had the luxury of time to complete this task, which significantly strengthened not only the report but also the involvement of the staff and campus communication about some preliminary results.

The subcommittee chairs visited often with the self-study chair regarding progress. When it became apparent the sheer amount of data collection and organization in the sections on resources and assessment was a problem, the steering committee immediately adjusted the timeline. It was important not to rush the process, which might have resulted in considerably less self-reflection and loss of potential for positive changes at the institution. Also because Kishwaukee's assessment program is a work in progress, it was very difficult to organize what was to be reported. This problem led to a decision by the steering committee to write the document with a September 1, 1998, cutoff date. Any changes that occurred following the September date would not be included in the report. A notebook of changes between September 1, 1998, and January 19, 1999, was developed for the evaluation team.

Flexibility of the timeline was also enhanced by another very good decision that was made at the beginning of the process. The steering committee determined that the six main sections—GIRs, mission, resources, assessment, ability to continue, and integrity—would be completed in a sequential order. A draft copy of the findings would be presented to the steering committee before the next subcommittee began its work. This prevented duplication of efforts and helped to tie the document together because the new working subcommittee benefited from the work completed by the previous committee. In actuality, the work on the GIRs and mission began at the same time and so did the work of the continuing and integrity subcommittees. It seemed only logical that the section on whether a college can continue to operate cannot be written until the mission, resources, and assessment results are known and can be used as documentation for the conclusions in the continuing chapter.

The biggest surprise for the chair and writing subcommittee was the amount of time that it took to put the writing of the seven or eight authors into one document. Five months were spent on rewriting, editing, formatting, and clarifying the document after the subcommittees had completed their work. Once again, without the three year period of time, this type of work would have been short changed and the document would not have been as nice a reflection of the work that had been done.

Handling Differences of Opinion

In any endeavor that includes a relatively large number of people, extends over a lengthy period of time, and deals with important institutional issues, differences of opinion are inevitable. An important skill for the self-study chair is the ability to gain consensus within a group of knowledgeable and strong-minded people. It must be understood by all, that when differences of opinion occur, those differences will be resolved by the self-study steering committee under the leadership of the chair. Once resolution of differences occurs, there can be no further debate on the issue as part of the self-study process. If further discussion is to occur, it must be left as a challenge for the future as part of some other process.

Differences of opinion must be dealt with as they occur and not left to fester, and they must be dealt with within the deliberations of the steering committee, which should have the authority to reach conclusions as they relate to the self-study. The steering committee chair must strive to reach consensus within the committee. Consensus may not mean unanimity of opinion, but it must mean acceptance by all once a decision is made following whatever debate that may occur. Once again, it should be understood up front by everyone that when inevitable differences of opinion occur, the differences will be resolved, as they relate to the self-study, by the steering committee; and the process will move ahead following the timelines.

Just as there is a difference between someone who paints a picture by following the numbers and one who paints from a vision, so is the difference between a college that simply completes the requirements of the self-study and a college that creates its own picture of its future through this required process.

Diane McNeilly is Associate Vice President of Career Transfer Programs at Kishwaukee College in Malta, Illinois.

Norman Jenkins is President of Kishwaukee College in Malta, Illinois.

Team Building: Key to a Successful Self-Study and Team Visit

Ronald D. Reed
Rolf C. Enger

Overview

The success of the United States Air Force Academy's recent re-accreditation visit (May 1999) can be attributed, in large part, to a strong Self-Study team representing a broad cross-section of the Academy community. How does an institution form a robust Self-Study team, keep it focused (even in the presence of honest differences of opinion), and properly prepare for the visit by the Evaluation Team? What are the tasks to be completed, and when? What are the pitfalls?

The self-study process at the Air Force Academy began in March 1996 when the Dean of the Faculty designated an initial faculty coordinator. That fall the coordinator worked with the Academy community and the NCA, selecting a date for the team visit and outlining the challenges ahead. In the spring of 1997, the faculty coordinator and deputy coordinator attended the NCA Annual Meeting to gain the latest information on the self-study and accreditation process. During the late spring and early summer, the faculty coordinator contacted all Academy agencies, explaining the self-study process and soliciting qualified and interested volunteers. In August the newly arrived Academy Superintendent (our CEO) formally appointed our Accreditation Steering Committee Chairperson (who also served as Self-Study Coordinator) and the initial members of the Steering Committee itself.

The Self-Study Steering Committee met for the first time in September and endorsed a draft Self-Study Plan and list of Chapter Coordinators. In October, the Superintendent approved both the plan and team structure. This carefully crafted, diverse team ensured that every voice was heard and properly documented in the Self-Study. By including representatives from across the Academy, it also served to energize the entire community, helping the institution seriously reflect on its accomplishments during the past ten years and identify challenges for the future. Consequently, the Academy's Self-Study document continues to be a useful reference and strategic planning guide.

Lessons Learned

Based on our experience, building a strong, diverse Self-Study team is one of several keys to a successful accreditation visit. The Academy's Steering committee and subcommittee membership included more than 100 individuals drawn from military and civilians, faculty and staff, current students and graduates. More than 25 Academy organizations were represented on these committees. In the paragraphs that follow, we share some of the lessons we learned in building and leading our successful Self-Study team.

◇ **Self-Study team membership.** The NCA *Handbook of Accreditation* clearly indicates that the Steering Committee and Self-Study team should represent multiple constituencies. But what background and experience should these representatives bring to the process? As indicated above, our team spanned the gamut from student to seasoned full professor and administrator. Clearly, this was important so that every voice could be heard and properly documented. However, the backbone of the Steering Committee was senior faculty and staff from across the Academy. In retrospect, this was a vitally important decision in preserving the value of the Self-Study as a springboard for change and as a strategic planning guide. By involving key

Academy leaders, we ensured that problems would be solved from the top down and that issues would get high-level visibility.

◇ **Self-Study Committee structure.** Our Self-Study Report was designed along a fairly typical format, aligned with the NCA Criteria for Accreditation and augmented with other chapters as needed for background and closure. We chose to establish Chapter Subcommittees, each chaired or co-chaired by members of the Steering Committee. This proved to be a wise decision as it established a strong link between the Steering Committee and Chapter Subcommittees and helped to keep the entire process on schedule. We also encouraged members to serve on multiple subcommittees, based on their expertise and interests. This strategy helped integrate the entire Self-Study document. Committee members serving on multiple subcommittees kept their committees informed of actions, decisions, and perspectives of the other committees. In addition, the Academy was fortunate to have three NCA Consultant-Evaluators on staff. Each chaired or co-chaired a Chapter Subcommittee and served globally as advisors to the entire self-study process. Their perspective was an added bonus.

◇ **Tackling tasks and providing guidance.** By aligning our Self-Study Report along the NCA Criteria for Accreditation, we inherited a natural task outline. At initial meetings, all members of the team received copies of the NCA *Handbook of Accreditation*, the approved Self-Study Plan (including a chapter outline), discussions of the key role of assessment, and other accreditation information. However, as work proceeded we noticed that Chapter Subcommittees tended to ignore this guidance, opting instead to define their chapter to suit their own personalities and perspectives. Furthermore, subcommittees tended to interpret their writing tasks as descriptive rather than as assessment and analysis. In part, this was a remnant of the past since our previous Self-Study (in 1989) was mainly descriptive and only loosely interconnected.

Initially, we tried to guide subcommittees by speaking off-line with Chapter Subcommittee chairs and by attending subcommittee meetings, urging members to critically analyze assessment and other data. In the end, we were most successful when we converted the NCA patterns of evidence to a series of action statements that were compiled into a standardized checklist for authors, editors, and reviewers. For example, the NCA patterns of evidence to consider whether there is an "understanding of the stated purposes by institutional constituencies" was rewritten as the following directive to the Criterion One subcommittee: "Prove that USAFA's constituencies understand USAFA's stated purposes." Looking back, we wished we had thought of this approach sooner. The checklist became the minimum standard to meet self-study requirements and a way to focus subcommittee efforts. Since the patterns of evidence actually are not intended to be such a rigid checklist, we also worked in parallel to keep subcommittee responses in perspective. We still were unable to prevent the inclusion of large amounts of descriptive information in the final Report (especially when individual organizations saw it as a way to trumpet their own successes or roles); however, we were able to ensure that the Report served its primary function.

◇ **Incorporating and integrating data.** This proved to be a significant challenge. The Academy has a rich heritage of data collection, extending back to our origins in the 1950s. Unfortunately, much of these data were simply collected and archived. As we conducted the Self-Study, we learned that even key decision makers were sometimes unaware of important data affecting their operations. To the credit of several subcommittees, a large amount of data was located, analyzed, and passed on to decision makers. In some cases, subcommittees spent months debating the validity and quality of data, reconciling seemingly contradictory indicators, and drawing substantiated conclusions that were then incorporated into the Self-Study. This was an important "value-added" contribution of the self-study process. In addition, the lessons we learned from this exercise will guide our assessment efforts in the future.

◇ **Handling conflicts.** We experienced very little interpersonal conflict on our team. In part, this was certainly because of the team nature of the Air Force. Air Force personnel are used to working together in teams—often at short notice. In fact, teaching our students how to do this is one of our desired educational outcomes. However, during the self-study process there were several issues that arose from competing points of view. For example, team members came to differing conclusions regarding the adequacy of information technology performance at the Academy. In other cases, individuals differed in their judgment of the quality of some assessment procedures and data. As might be expected, these issues led to lively debates through (and possibly healthy checks and balances on) the entire self-study process. Nevertheless, the Steering Committee Chair must be continually alert to the risk that the self-study process and the Self-Study Report can be viewed by some as a means of advancing the agendas of individuals or organizations. One effective way of moderating this tendency, and also of highlighting to the evaluation team that we had considered our own strengths and weaknesses, was listing specific "Challenges" at the end of every chapter dealing with an accreditation criterion. Whatever the discussion within these chapters or in Resource Room support documents, the "Challenges" were corporately approved synopses of major issues we would address over the next decade.

◇ **Establishing a reasonable timeline.** The faculty coordinator in consultation with our NCA liaison drafted the original timeline. That proved to be an excellent strategy. Further refinements were made approximately nine months prior to the team visit by working backwards, allowing generous amounts of time for mailing, printing, institutional review, and several working drafts. Every effort was made to stay on schedule. Initially, some subcommittee members objected that they didn't have enough time to prepare their chapters. In those early stages it was easy to underestimate how long it would take to work through several drafts, coordinate the final document, and then print it. Our deadline for a first draft, more than seven months prior to the site visit, seemed to many to be unreasonably early. Fortunately, the Steering Committee held its ground. In the end, we needed every day in the schedule and could have used a few more.

◇ **Maintaining focus without stifling creativity and initiative.** According to the NCA *Handbook of Accreditation*, the Self-Study Report is an institutional document that

- ○ Summarizes the purposes and findings of the self-study process.
- ○ Demonstrates the institution's ability to analyze its effectiveness and develop plans for its own improvement.
- ○ Provides evidence that the institution fulfills the Commission's General Institutional Requirements and the Criteria for Accreditation.

Consequently, it should reflect an institutional perspective and represent a consensus opinion that speaks for the institution. In addition, the Self-Study has purposes that go beyond accreditation. These include such things as self-assessment, communication with constituencies, and strategic planning. Given the fact that consensus is difficult to reach in large groups (our team numbered over 100), maintaining focus without stifling creativity and initiative was a considerable challenge. We had the most success when we took the time to first agree upon an outline and when we included time for multiple iterations. The agreed upon outline served to focus everyone's efforts and the iterative approach ensured that every voice was truly heard and properly documented. We also reinforced the concept several times that our subcommittees were *not* in charge of "writing" a portion of the Report; rather, their role was to collect data and generate inputs and drafts that would then be written into a final, corporately approved report by our authoring and editing group.

◇ **Establishing a single voice.** Although ideally drafted through a committee process, no institution would want its Self-Study to read as though written by committee. Creating a Self-Study with a "single voice" proved to be a huge task that we underestimated. At previous NCA Annual Meetings we had met Self-Study Chairs whose full-time responsibility was oversight and production of the Self-Study. We now appreciate why that is an excellent institutional strategy. Both our Self-Study Chair and Vice Chair took on these self-study responsibilities as additional duties; in fact, the Chair retained all of his responsibilities as a department head throughout the self-study process. As the Self-Study moved closer to its final form, it became increasingly clear that one or two authors were needed to provide a "single voice." That task fell to the Chair, with assistance from the Vice Chair. At times, little else could be accomplished. Producing the Self-Study became a full time job! Taking over this job also was one significant change to our timeline. It became apparent about six months before the team visit that we were rapidly losing the value of using successive chapter drafts as a vehicle by which editors provided feedback to committees; we then reversed our strategy, asking committees instead to provide feedback on more integrated drafts written by the Chair and Vice Chair.

◇ **A team approach to the evaluation visit.** The team visit is truly a "whirlwind" experience. Careful planning and coordination is essential. The Self-Study Steering Committee Chair worked with the Team Chair for weeks in advance of our evaluation visit, ensuring that everything was in place and ready. This proved to be essential. However, we learned that it is also important to remain flexible. Team members can only partially predict what they will find by reading the Self-Study. Thus, once they arrive and begin their work, they will inevitably want to make changes to the initial schedule. We found it necessary to have escorts constantly available to help team members locate information and find their way to hastily scheduled meetings throughout the institution. In addition, given the need for short-notice support, it is imperative to alert institutional staff and support agencies to the importance and unpredictability of the team visit. For example, as a result of the Academy's altitude (approximately 7,000 feet above sea level), one team member requested a wheelchair. Meeting this need required quick action and cooperation from our student health services team.

At the time of our team visit, the Academy Board of Visitors (equivalent to a board of regents) included two university educators. We were very grateful that our Superintendent invited them to be at the Academy during the team visit. They spent a considerable amount of time with members of the Evaluation Team and provided insights and perspectives that were extremely helpful. In addition, we learned that it is extremely important to ensure the institution President (in our case the Superintendent) is available both at the beginning and at the end of the evaluation visit. The Team will certainly wish to meet the President at the onset of the visit. But, as NCA points out in their handbook, many Team Chairs like to meet with the Executive Officer alone before the exit session. That was true in our case.

◇ **Take time to say thanks.** At the end of our evaluation visit, our Dean organized a campus-wide party to celebrate. We also ensured that all involved self-study team members received individual recognition through their supervisors, where appropriate. Other institutions have had social gatherings for their team throughout the self-study process. At the Academy, this was not necessary because we already have a small, closely knit community. However, reaching closure at the end of the self-study process is an essential way to say "thanks" and a springboard for actions in the future based on the self-study process.

Conclusion

Without question, team building is the key to a successful Self-Study and accreditation visit. Only by carefully crafting such a diverse self-study team can the institution ensure that every voice will be heard and properly documented in the Self-Study. Only by including representatives from across the institution can the Self-Study serve to energize the entire community, encourage serious reflection, and identify challenges for the future that result in a useful reference and strategic planning guide. By building a broadly represented team, the resulting Self-Study becomes "our document" rather than "their document." A Self-Study built by such a team has the potential to spark a renewed sense of enthusiasm and rekindle the entire community's commitment to excellence. It did for us.

Ronald D. Reed is Professor and Head of the Department of Biology at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado.

Rolf C. Enger is Director of Education at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado.

The Chicken Little Syndrome: Demystifying the Self-Study Process

Ann Frankland

Introduction

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma is a small, publicly-supported liberal arts college, NCA accredited since the 1920s. Problems in the early 1970s resulted in threatened loss of accreditation, but under new and more stable leadership in 1975 the school began a rebuilding process that restored full accreditation. The 1989 evaluation team recommended continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years, but cited several serious concerns. In the following years the institution's three-fold goal was to address those concerns arising from the past while serving students effectively in the present and positioning the school for a secure future.

As the time approached for its next comprehensive evaluation, USAO was confident that it had accomplished all three of these objectives. It remained only to decide how best to convince outside evaluators of this. Time proved the institution's choices valid, as in March 1999 USAO was granted continuing accreditation and ten years to the next comprehensive evaluation, and its self-study and Self-Study Report received glowing praise from the evaluators.

Gaining Perspective

In both its sweeping comprehensiveness and its immeasurable importance to an institution, accreditation evaluation is a daunting concept, and the self-study leading to the official request for continued accreditation can literally begin to seem like the sky is falling if it is viewed only in regard to a final goal. This can be especially true if, as in the case of USAO, the Self-Study Coordinator has had little previous experience with the process.

The logical first step is attending the NCA Annual Meetings, but these, too, can prove problematic to the uninitiated. While the General Meetings and the Pre-Conference Workshops provide a great deal of valuable information, much of that information has to do with specific aspects of the process. These are primarily parts, which are likely to be troublesome or which involve new requirements, such assessment and third-party comments, both relatively new and unfamiliar concerns for Commission institutions when the USAO process began.

Suddenly, the continuing accreditation "sky" that will fall should the process not go well can become obscured by the individual problems that loom along the journey to the final goal. The coordinator or self-study team will return home with reams of material and much advice that will prove useful, but they may also take with them an overwhelming sense of inadequacy to the task. Each of those problems they have heard discussed assumes gigantic proportions. Pitfalls lurk everywhere.

The problem then becomes one of balance. On the one extreme, contemplation of the desired final result makes the project seem more onerous than it actually is. On the other, seeing the project as a series of disconnected fragments makes each part an insurmountable obstacle. Either of these creates dismay and dread, eating up time and energy, which are better directed toward accomplishing the task at hand.

Ultimately, a successful bid for continuing (or, for that matter, initial) accreditation will require a balanced overview of the self-study process from beginning to end, a vision that recognizes the logical connections of each part to the whole, emphasizes the essential "do-ableness" of it, and stresses its positive nature. This vision must be of the overall purpose of the self-study process *as a process* and therefore as a reasonable exercise that is best accomplished by a series of easily identifiable steps. Of course, the best place to gain this overview is the *Handbook of Accreditation*. In the case of USAO, however, the updated version (the Second Edition) was not available until the fall of 1997, a full year after the self-study process began. Additionally, the *Handbook*, with its 250 pages of information, can be a little daunting in and of itself!

Beginning the Process

☐ The Coordinator

The *Handbook* identifies the Self-Study Coordinator as

> responsible for the overall direction and execution of the self-study and for the preparation of the Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Coordinator should command respect and confidence from across the institution and possess wide knowledge of institutional personnel, activities, and organizations. . . Because writing and editing the Self-Study Report are usually major responsibilities, good human relations and communication skills are essential.

What that means is that the coordinator will play many roles in the months of the process, ranging from cheerleader to cajoler to confessor to suppliant to whip wielder to diplomat. This individual is appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, and his or her authority flows directly from this top office. Every member of the institutional community needs to be made aware of this in order to assure prompt cooperation.

Perhaps the first role of the coordinator is that of "battery"—in delivering the starting charge to begin the process. This individual must have a clear understanding of all phases of the process as early as possible. The best way to guarantee this is to begin with a plan—in this case, a Comprehensive Evaluation Self-Study Plan.

☐ The Plan

Officially, this plan is the creation of the Steering Committee. In its final form it will be submitted to the Commission for approval. However, the coordinator is often appointed before the Steering Committee, and the sooner he or she has some kind of plan of action the better. This first plan should include every step of the project and an all-important Timeline for the accomplishment of those steps. Even though it is unofficial, it will save the coordinator's sanity as well as keep the process on track during its initial phases.

☐ Constituencies

Involvement of all the various constituencies of an institution is required both by the NCA guidelines and for the practical purposes of gathering and reporting data. Everyone connected with a school will be affected by the self-study and its results; therefore, everyone has both the right and the responsibility to be part of the process.

This involvement begins with the appointment of a Steering Committee. This group will finalize the official Self-Study Plan, set tasks for information gathering, and determine appropriate sub-committees. At USAO, each member of the Steering Committee served as a co-chair of one of the sub-committees, and each was in a position of authority or responsibility that gave them access to needed information or guaranteed that they would know where that information was and how it could be retrieved.

It is important that information flow both ways, so throughout the project all constituencies should be kept abreast of the ongoing study. Those most immediately involved—the Steering Committee and the sub-committee members—will play a key role in the exchange of information, but primary responsibility will probably lie with the coordinator. At USAO the coordinator made regular presentations to faculty assemblies, spoke to community organizations, and corresponded with constituents away from the immediate community, such as alumni. She also made regular appearances at the monthly meetings of the Board of Regents to keep them informed of the status of the project. During the writing of the official Report, she provided this governing body with copies of each chapter as it was completed in final draft form, asking for suggestions, corrections, and general comments.

Completing the Process

☐ Information Gathering

Following the appointment of committees, an extended period of information gathering and generating will begin. There was probably a time when the generation of supporting data may well have been the most time-consuming aspect of this part of the entire process. However, considering the technological advances of recent years and the call for accountability that has become a major part of the academic atmosphere in the past decade, this may have changed. In the ten years since its previous evaluation, USAO had made major investments in technology and was truly "wired." The school had also been conscientiously assessing itself over that same period, even before it was required to do so. Consequently, most of the information required for the self-study was already available.

At the very heart of the self-study is collecting the information and the data that justify an institution's request for continued accreditation by NCA's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, and this is where the most trepidation exists among those involved in the process. In reality, although the purpose of the evaluation process should be taken very seriously and its result is the very lifeblood of an institution, the charge to the institution is much simpler than it appears at first.

Every institution of higher education has a mission and an accompanying Mission Statement. Central to the entire accreditation endeavor is the mission statement of any school and the ability of that school to demonstrate that it is accomplishing that mission and that it can continue to do so.

The *Handbook of Accreditation* lists and explains the General Institutional Requirements and the (currently) five Criteria any school must meet in order to accomplish its mission. It also lists in great detail the kinds of data needed to demonstrate its ability to do this. The *Handbook* will be the coordinator's best friend, and probably will be his or her closest companion, during the entire process.

Nowhere in the *Handbook* will anyone find admonition that an institution must be perfect. The Commission understands that all schools have their problems, even though they may be called challenges. What the Commission asks from its affiliates is that they be honestly working at being what they say they are.

☐ The Report

The Timeline will show a specific date when "drafting of the Report begins," but in actuality, that drafting probably has begun long before then. Keep in mind that a draft is not the Report itself, just a preliminary form of it. In this way, as information comes in, or as particular committees complete their work, this information can be "plugged in" to its probable place in the Report. By the time all the information is collected, the Report will have assumed an actual form; and the final drafting and revising will take much less time.

This particular step in the process will vary among institutions. While responsibility for preparing the Report officially rests with the coordinator, some schools choose to assign responsibility for writing certain sections to various individuals or committees, and the coordinator compiles these into a final document. At USAO the coordinator was charged by the President, himself a consultant-evaluator for many years, with the actual writing of the entire document, in order to guarantee that it had one voice and one style throughout. In addition to its highly favorable report concerning the University itself, the evaluation team expressed appreciation for the clarity and style of the Report.

☐ The Team Visit

Finally, after two or three years of preparation, comes the moment of truth. The evaluation team member have been chosen, and they have been in possession of the Report for at least two months. They will have studied carefully the way in which an institution presents itself on paper and will be expecting to see that image borne out during their on-site visit.

The team visit will generally last about two and one-half days. The evaluation team will spend much of its time in the Resource Room the institution has prepared, looking at the documents that support the Report. However, the entire forces of an institution should be mobilized and prepared to respond to requests from team members, ranging from specially scheduled meetings with various constituencies to casual conversations in passing. The visit will end with an Exit Session at which time evaluators will present their preliminary findings, including their proposed recommendation and the rationale for that recommendation.

☐ The Follow-up

The process is not over yet. Within about three months—sometimes considerably earlier—the institution will receive the official written Team Report, which will elaborate on the initial findings. At this time the institution's Chief Executive Officer makes a formal written response to the Team Report.

It's All Over—for Now

If all have done their jobs well, the Exit Session with the Evaluation Team results in smiles all around and a time of rejoicing. Such was the case at USAO in March of 1999.

Having successfully completed a self-study and gained a continued accreditation recommendation, USAO congratulated itself and then went to work preparing for the 2009 visit. The findings of the self-study were incorporated into the institution's new Strategic Planning Document, and decisions being made at this time are being considered with an eye toward how they will position the institution for another favorable review in ten years.

Ann Frankland is Professor of English and Chair of the Division of Arts and Humanities at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasha.

Each subcommittee consisted of faculty, certified professional staff, and classified professional staff members. Each subcommittee had an editor whose job was to pull together the smaller reports into a coherent narrative. As the editors put together the narrative, they reviewed the patterns of evidence and examined the text for evaluative rather than descriptive writing. Each subcommittee had designated administrative officers who served as support and resource persons to aid in gathering appropriate information and to verify data. All together more than 100 Jefferson College staff members served on self-study subcommittees. Those not serving on committees were called upon to provide information when necessary and to attend informational forums as the self-study process moved toward its end goal of a finished Self-Study Report by November 1998.

The Self-Study Report, which is the result of the research and study of the ten subcommittees, reflects a criterion-based approach to institutional self-evaluation. The first two chapters provide background information on the institution; the community it serves; and the College's response to the 1988 visit, describing significant changes and improvements. Chapter three details Jefferson College's meeting of all 24 General Institutional Requirements. The subsequent chapters address the five Criteria for Accreditation in numerical order. The report then ends with a summary chapter that describes overall strengths and challenges.

Subcommittees

Criterion One
Mission and Purposes Committee

Criterion Two
Governance and Organizational Structure Committee
Human Resources Committee
Financial Resources Committee
Physical Resources Committee

Criterion Three
Instructional Programs and Services Committee
Student and Administrative Services Committee

Criterion Four
Institutional Effectiveness Committee
Student Outcomes Committee

Criterion Five
Integrity Committee

Support
Resource Room and Exhibits Committee

Producing Evaluative Writing

Distinguishing between descriptive and evaluative writing is another key to producing a successful Self-Study Report. It is tempting to produce page after page of description of the institution—its facilities, programs, committees, plans, etc.—and that information is necessary to provide the evaluation team with facts and figures it needs about the institution. But what is essential to a good self-study is to move beyond description, to examine issues from various angles, to interpret, to draw conclusions, and to seek resolutions.

We were successful on this front because we first identified our college's strongest writers and then asked them to serve as chapter editors if they weren't already on the Steering Committee. We also had workshops conducted by English department members for the editors and Steering Committee members. In these meetings we stressed that evaluative statements require support, and we suggested incorporating analyses of institutional research as well as external survey information as proof that we were not only doing what we said we were doing, but that we were doing it exceptionally well. In some cases our format encouraged evaluation: a prime example was our chapter on instructional programs and services in which we structured our narrative around the strengths of various disciplines and then addressed future opportunities within the areas as evidence of our goals and our commitment to improving programs, equipment, student opportunities, etc.

The foundation of evaluative writing is clear, concise, specific language. Therefore, we edited the report ruthlessly, cutting out as much deadwood as possible and avoiding as much educational jargon as possible.

Involving the Whole Campus

In keeping with our goals of examining overall institutional effectiveness and familiarizing all employees with the roles and functions of the institution, we did our best to involve as many members of the campus community as possible in the self-study process. As mentioned above, more than 100 people—including employees and community and Board of Trustee members—participated in the subcommittee structures that gathered information and contributed to the writing of the initial Self-Study Report drafts. Although not everyone served on a subcommittee, all employees

Strategies for Surviving the Self-Study Process

Trish Loomis
Loretta Ponzar
Mindy Selsor

From March 1996 to March 1999 we at Jefferson College planned, organized, collected data, and otherwise conducted a self-study. After concluding our study, we wrote the document and prepared for a visit from a North Central evaluation team. The team, which visited our campus March 1-3, 1999, recommended that accreditation be continued and that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled in ten years. All in all we were quite successful in our approach to the self-study process and in our production of a good, evaluative Self-Study Report. We believe that we can assist other self-study coordinators and steering committee members by sharing our experiences and offering survival strategies and practical advice.

Self-Study Process

A key to writing a successful Self-Study Report is structure. Three years before the scheduled evaluation visit, a Self-Study Coordinator was appointed. Six months later the Coordinator and two Vice Presidents chose a Steering Committee comprised of key personnel from various divisions of the college. The Steering Committee included faculty from Arts and Sciences and the Technology Division. Additionally, the Director of Assessment, the Director of Admissions and Financial Assistance, the Controller, the Director of Research and Planning, two division chairs, and the Faculty Senate President were appointed to the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee members met several times during the Fall 1996 semester to familiarize themselves with the five Criteria and the 24 General Institutional Requirements; to determine the goals and purposes of the Self-Study Report; and to discuss strategies for reporting, organizing, and writing the current Self-Study Report.

In summary the goals of the self-study were:

- to examine the institution's overall effectiveness, identifying strengths and weaknesses;
- to capitalize on the strengths of the institution that are identified by the self-study process;
- to focus on strengthening areas of concern that are identified by the self-study process;
- to familiarize all employees with the roles and functions of the institution through the self-study process;
- to demonstrate in a coherent narrative that Jefferson College meets all 24 General Institutional Requirements and fulfills the five Criteria; and
- to achieve continued accreditation with the next review in ten years.

Writing the Self-Study Report

The self-study research and reporting were organized around the five Criteria that each institution must fulfill for NCA accreditation. Each Steering Committee member served as the chair of a subcommittee which studied the assigned Criteria as well as the appropriate GIRs as suggested in *The Handbook of Accreditation* (27). The list of subcommittees follows.

were invited to contribute information about their particular areas of expertise, from administration to maintenance and from instruction, both full-time and adjunct faculty, to clerical staff and food service.

To ensure frequent and accurate communication, the Steering Committee, which met at least once a month, published its minutes campus-wide, at first through interoffice mail and then via campus e-mail. From 1996–1998 at the annual fall orientation meeting, the Self-Study Coordinator provided first an introduction to the self-study process and then in the second and third year of the self-study process, progress reports to all employees.

The Self-Study Coordinator and select Steering Committee members made presentations at several of the monthly Board of Trustee meetings on issues such as fulfilling General Institutional Requirements, federal compliance, and institutional climate survey findings. A summary of those presentations appeared in the biweekly in-house newsletter, *The Windjammer*, which has a wide distribution both on and off campus.

Additionally, copies of the final Self-Study Report were distributed around campus.

Preparing for the Team Visit

Our evaluation team was scheduled to arrive March 1, 1999. Although we had communicated process and progress regularly to employees through the multiple means mentioned above, we made one final all-out effort to inform both employees and students about the purpose of the upcoming visit, to remind them of the details of the three-year self-study we had conducted, and to share our findings with them. In February 1999, the President of Jefferson College and the Self-Study Coordinator conducted five employee meetings on three different days at times ranging from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. At these meetings we distributed the concluding chapter of the Self-Study Report, which was a summary of strengths and concerns identified during the self-study process, and discussed the potential roles of employees during the upcoming visit. We even videotaped one of the sessions and put the tape in the Library for viewing by anyone who could not make it to a scheduled meeting.

To make sure students were aware of the visit and its purpose, the Self-Study Coordinator wrote an article for the student newspaper, which appeared at the end of February. Also the Coordinator and the Vice President of Academic Affairs attended three different meetings with student leaders to provide information on accreditation, to explain the students' role in the evaluation, and to answer questions.

Building an Effective Resource Room

As with most parts of the self-study process, a key to building an effective resource room is planning and structure. Once we had established that our report would be criterion based, and once we had assigned specific chapters to the Steering Committee members, we identified key individuals on campus who could assist with the gathering of documents that would support the narratives of the different chapters, thereby providing the patterns of evidence essential to a successful Self-Study Report.

Fortunately, we were able to begin building a temporary resource room that could house reports, studies, planning documents, etc., which the subcommittees could consult as they drafted preliminary reports that fed into the self-study chapters.

We also identified a larger, centrally located space on the second floor of the Library that would serve as the team resource room during the evaluation visit. We reserved the room for the month before the team's visit and began moving documents from the temporary resource room. Our primary goal, of course, was to provide the team with sufficient evidence in support of our final Self-Study Report; but we were also determined to make the space as attractive and user friendly as possible.

We wanted the team to be comfortable, so we provided ample work space, which included large tables with pads, pens, and other useful office supplies such as Post-It™ notes. We provided phones; personal computers; a printer; access to a copier; and, of course, a detailed index of materials in the rooms.

We were able to move in appropriate furniture to display our documents. We decided to use tables, each of which was devoted to support materials for one of the five criteria. We also designated a table for display of our self-study process including copies of previous Self-Study Reports and drafts of the current report. Fortunately, for the past several years the institution has not only conducted research and produced planning and program review documents, year end reports, student surveys, and other appropriate studies, but also the reports have been packaged in reader friendly, bound volumes. Consequently, our presentation was excellent, very organized and readily accessible to the team.

Conclusion

Conducting a self-study is such a huge, often daunting, task that it sometimes seems overwhelming. However, with planning, agreed upon goals and format, and a well defined structure for investigating, reporting, drafting, revising and editing, the task can be completed with few pitfalls and only moderate stress. It's like winning the Women's World Cup in soccer—some folks work exceedingly hard for years to pull off a really great victory. Yet we can all bask in the glory, revel in the celebration, and walk around with pride because we're part of a great institution.

Trish Loomis is Professor of English and Honors Program Director at Jefferson College in Hillsboro, Missouri.

Loretta Ponzar is Technical Services Librarian at Jefferson College in Hillsboro, Missouri.

Mindy Selsor is Division Chair of Communication Arts at Jefferson College in Hillsboro, Missouri.

Tricks, Treats, and Traps

Judith J. Shultz
Donna S. Statzell

Background

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) is the United States' first partnership between a tribally controlled community college and a state government. The unique partnership between the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the State of Minnesota provides the foundation for an educational experience with an emphasis on the Anishinaabe culture and American Indian population of Minnesota. FDLTCC presently employs 80 people with an annual budget of approximately $4.2 million.

When established in 1987 in Cloquet, Minnesota, as a college center by the Minnesota Community College System and as a tribal college by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), FDLTCC had a first quarter student fte of 96.5. In 1994, FDLTCC became the 19th fully funded community college within the state of Minnesota. During that same year, the U.S. Congress passed legislation giving FDLTCC land grant status as a tribal college under the Tribally Controlled Community College Act.

While our status as a tribal college has been that of an independent institution, our relationship with the State of Minnesota Higher Education System was first as a center of Mesabi Community College, then as a member of the Northeast Minnesota Arrowhead Community College Region (ACCR). Following the legislative dissolution of the ACCR, in 1996, FDLTCC became a member of the Minnesota State College and University System (MnSCU). In addition to its membership in MnSCU, FDLTCC is also a member of The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), which represents 31 tribal colleges in the U.S. and Canada. Worthy to note is that Minnesota is a collective bargaining state, and FDLTCC has four bargaining units on campus.

The present campus, which opened in 1992, enrolls approximately 1,000 students with an FTE of approximately 560 each semester. The institution focuses its attention on cultural awareness and understanding. FDLTCC's curriculum offers a wide array of Anishinaabe and other American Indian courses; components of other liberal arts courses incorporate culturally relevant American Indian material. On-campus housing opened in fall 1999.

FDLTCC is an institution that has undergone many changes. The Minnesota Higher Education System also has undergone rapid changes during the last decade. However, when the process for FDLTCC re-accreditation started in 1997 with an NCA focused visit, comments made by the visiting team regarding the "good health," "institutional maturity," and "vibrant college" encouraged us in our self-study process. The process we created is not ours alone; in our ideas you will see the influence of much conference attending, reading, studying, and connecting with colleagues from other institutions who knew far more than anyone on our campus about the accreditation process. It is because of the work done by and the dedication of FDLTCC employees, however, that in May 1999 our campus was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled in ten years.

This paper focuses on many of the ideas that we used at FDLTCC to trick and treat people into the work necessary to survive and thrive as a small campus involved in the accreditation process while learning from and avoiding the traps hindering this process. We hope that you will review the ideas suggested, experiment with them, and then modify them to fit your own campus climate.

Tricks

When we began the NCA self-study preparation process, we were only two years away from our NCA visit, so in a short time much had to be accomplished at a high level of efficiency. The campus administration believed firmly that the process must be faculty driven. Thus, the chair for each of our two NCA committees–the self-study steering committee and the assessment committee–was a faculty member who had been approved by the college administration and faculty. The administration chose individuals with whom they could work well and who they believed could work well with other employee bargaining units and individuals on the campus. Administrative support of both the self-study process and of the individuals spearheading that process is absolutely necessary. Our president had heard the message from NCA about a faculty-driven process and carried this commitment and message back to the campus for implementation.

Closely tied to administrative support for the NCA self-study process is the trick of having a campus-created process and having leaders who are supported by the campus membership. The self-study chair must be carefully chosen; s/he is the key player in the NCA process. As you choose a leader for your own self-study process, consider the attributes and abilities you want this person to have. Certainly the ability to organize minute details and to keep the process moving forward without making others feel threatened is of great importance. Organization is also of concern as this individual will have to devise a system that grows astronomically as data are collected and analyzed. Once the individual is chosen, s/he should become very familiar with both the NCA *Handbook*, which becomes your bible for process and procedure, and with any previous campus NCA documents. A trick for the leader is to balance the questions the staff ask while strategically using outside resources and information in an effort to answer not only these questions but questions the team chair has raised.

Furthermore, balance also is needed when deciding to seek help from outside sources. As your leader begins the process of learning about NCA and its requirements for accreditation, vital connections can be made at informal get-togethers. Reviewing and reading everything you can on the process and its parts is also important. Sometimes looking on the Internet or going to written examples or sources you have amassed as you created your process works just as well.

As we worked through our process as a campus, one of the continual stumbling blocks seemed to be fear. This emotion took many shapes–fear of the self-study process, fear of how collected data would be used, fear of the end product. You can't get rid of that emotion, but the trick is to deal with it whenever possible in discussions that you have with various campus groups. Helping people to understand that the self-study process is about improvement continues to be an ongoing challenge for us. We continue to focus our attention on fact finding rather than fault finding.

Another trick to pull off is the balance needed to maintain the current process while also looking ahead to the next step. For us, we found that disclosing information on a need-to-know basis worked well. As leaders, we wanted everyone to focus on the small steps while we kept the big picture in mind. Ours is a small campus where every individual has numerous responsibilities. If campus participants became aware of all the minute details that needed to be handled during the time they had to prepare, some might see the task as too awesome and unmanageable and be frightened off.

Balance also includes knowing when to fight and when to walk away. Many of us know that it is a rare college that can say that everyone participated in the process. Everyone on our campus had an opportunity to be part of the self-study process, and they were kept informed through every means available of what was going on. If an individual chose not to participate, that was his/her decision. The trick for the self-study chair was to accept a person's choosing not to participate and to move on working with those who chose to participate.

Treats

Tricks intertwined with treats, which we used to entice people to be a part of the process. After attending conferences, reviewing numerous Self-Study Reports and assessment plans, and being at least one-quarter step in front of our colleagues–or at least appearing as such–we firmly believed that efforts had to be rewarded. Therefore, our motto of "If you feed them, they will come" emerged. Any meeting concerning the NCA process included treats–snack foods and sometimes even a meal–for efforts that deserved appreciation. Chocolate was an absolute necessity.

When a particularly important milestone was reached, invitations were sent to individuals who had met this goal and a free meal was served–e.g., sandwiches, fruit trays, beverages–and, for that one hour, there was no discussion about NCA and assessment. We made sure that anyone who worked on the process in his/her area and had met the time line, collected data, and reported the findings of that data collection was rewarded and told that his/her contribution really mattered to the success of the FDLTCC campus.

As a small campus with limited resources and a concern regarding how to begin the self-study process, one of our best treats was the infusion of outside monetary resources to kick off the self-study and assessment processes. As we began the self-study process, the campus was writing a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant. With a bit of revision, this Native American Higher Education Initiative grant entitled "Assessing the Dream" focused its attention on faculty development and allowed us in fall 1997 and again in fall 1998 to bring in nationally known speakers–Dr. Patsy Thrash, NCA Executive Director Emeritus; Dr. Cecilia López, NCA-CIHE liaison; Dr. Jeff Seybert, Director of Institutional Research, Johnson County Community College; Dr. Shirley Palumbo, Assistant to the President, Columbus State Community College; Dr. Karen Wells, Vice-President of Instruction, Sinclair Community College; and Larry LaCounte, Director, McNairs Scholar Program, University of Montana, Missoula–to guide campus inservice workshops on NCA and assessment. These workshops were attended by our entire campus membership as well as representatives of four other tribal colleges that were partners in our Kellogg grant and were also going through or would go through the NCA process.

Meetings focused our attention on creating a workable campus process by encouraging us to review mission statements, discuss campus and departmental goals, and begin to articulate our institutional effectiveness model. Our experiences also spurred ongoing discussions for semesters to come and helped us to see that assessment and the NCA self-study process could not be accomplished by any cookie cutter method. We had to find what worked for us. This process gave us a built-in network of small campus chairperson connections with which to share triumphs, trials, and tribulations. These speakers did not tell us how to do our process or what the process or our model should look like for FDLTCC; that was for us to decide. They were, however, invaluable as resources, supporters, mentors, and guides as the campus made those decisions.

In addition, many faculty members were treated to trips to various conferences that related to NCA and to assessment. We continued each semester to add more voices to our choir as more staff realized that assessment is not just a passing fad–it's for life.

Traps

As stated earlier, leadership is the most important key to success. Leadership can also be a serious trap–specifically the trap of process leadership. The process is an all-important component to a successful self-study experience. Some campuses choose to have the process led by an administrator, some by faculty, some by an outsider specifically brought in to lead the campus through the NCA process. These are options. The important thing is to find what fits your campus. We believe a poor choice is leaving the leadership of the self-study and the assessment components to one person. That one person could easily be set up for failure and begin to feel that he/she is the lone voice of NCA on the campus. Sharing the duties of leadership on a small campus between two people makes the process a bit more manageable and, as we learned, neither individual lacks for work to do as the process begins to gain momentum. The leader must have the support and trust of the administration. The leader should also be the individual who writes the Self-Study Report because the leader combines the many voices into one. S/he has the big picture.

Involvement of campus membership is another trap. How will your campus handle people who are not on campus all day–those who come in only in the evenings or only to teach one course or only work from their homes teaching by Internet? We worked to get everyone involved. We encouraged attendance at the NCA Annual Meeting and at a number of conferences focused on assessment. We gave each faculty member copies of assessment information. Soon, in addition to our two leaders, we had others joining the choir adding in ideas as well as supporting the process. We even had fun doing portions of the process. For instance, our self-study chairperson is the proud owner of a leather whip as we constantly joked about her cracking the whip to get things done.

Another trap is relying on others' abilities to dig for and collect information. Although committee members were given responsibility for gathering data and reporting the information to the self-study text writer, the leaders still had to know about the data the committee members were collecting. Essentially, the leaders became experts on every aspect of the campus. We knew–and continue to know–what the maintenance people were doing and are planning to do, if the support staff is happy with job descriptions, how the faculty is reacting to the latest work load, how the president believes he can best carry out his duties and on what basis he will be assessed, and the list could go on and on. Even though someone else is collecting the data, the leaders need to know what kind of data to expect and to have questions prepared if any holes appear to be present in the data. The committee chairs also constantly remind the campus of the need to adhere to the timeline.

Yet another trap to anticipate is the trap of poor communication. In this time of technology, some campuses are choosing to put all their information on a web site to share with campus membership. Make sure that ALL members are able to and know how to access the web site. We emailed everyone. We also made the decision to use reams and reams of brightly colored paper to be absolutely sure that everyone could recognize NCA-related mailings and so had the opportunity to know what was happening with NCA, to review each draft of distributed documents, and had time to think about the information. We believe that everyone learned more about the college through this self-study process.

One final trap to watch for is an embarrassing one—missing a step in the process. After creating assessment goals for departments and for courses, the assessment chairperson realized that a step had been missed. We backed up and directly tied the department goals to the campus mission statement. It was as simple as that—admit that a mistake had been made and then determine how best to correct that mistake. Remember, NCA is about process. Process involves determining directions, trying things out to see what works, and reviewing collected data. When something doesn't work, that's okay—make some changes and try again.

Although we are by no means experts in the self-study process, we learned and continue to learn about NCA, about assessment, and about what other campuses are doing. We encourage you to consider carefully the tricks, treats, and traps you will use.

Judith J. Shultz is a Faculty Member at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minnesota.

Donna S. Statzell is Associate Dean of Instruction at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minnesota.

The End Really in Sight: Final Preparations for the Team Visit

Daniel P. Larson
Mimi Elwell

The self-study with its institutional evaluation is a critical task to accomplish. It takes several months of sustained activity to reach the mid-point where the project is well underway and the Report in initial draft form. Now, the preparation leading to the team visit should become as important as the work thus far on research and data collection. At this point, coordinators may fear that the project never will conclude with a final document, or that it will lead to their own insanity. Their role enlarges from a singular focus on the self-study to one of encompassing plans and details that will make the visit a success. These items include:

- ○ review and preparation of the Report itself
- ○ communication with campus constituencies and stakeholders
- ○ implementation of the Third Party Comment process
- ○ preparation of campus personnel and facilities
- ○ planning for the resource room
- ○ coordination with the team chair
- ○ final details before the visit

The self-study must remain on task and meet deadlines, even as the "other" work of the institution continues. One approach would be to consider these preparations from the vantage point of a team member coming for the evaluating visit. Plan what would be of greatest benefit to you for the visit if you were that team member, and organize things that way. Above all, keep the project in perspective, continue with your self-study plan, stay organized, maintain a sense of humor, and keep working as a neutral party at your institution. Although the team will visit and leave the campus, you will remain behind with your peers. Do not jeopardize or place those relationships at risk.

This paper presents advice and details in capsule form about the items listed above.

☐ Review and Preparation of the Report Itself

- ○ Continuing release time, equipment, and clerical support are critical for the project coordinator[s]. This is not the time to slack off or to believe that the bulk of the work already has been accomplished. Even with the Report in reasonable draft form, much work remains to be done.
- ○ Maintain contact with the NCA staff liaison as needed. Questions of approach, content, and format should be addressed as they arise. Do not allow them to languish in the hope that they will resolve themselves—they will not.
- ○ Evaluate the self-study plan and timeline, and modify them as needed. Some details already may have changed, with ensuing impact upon successive steps. The plan should be a guide to help complete the self-study—the means to the end, not vice versa.
- ○ Contacts with Self-Study Coordinators within your own state can provide a good support network. Talk about your self-study in state meetings and organizations. Although the best moral support often is a listening ear, you might learn a "best practices" approach from a colleague to help you.

- ○ Work with an editor or compiler of the final document to preserve consistency in writing, tone, and approach—within chapters and throughout the Report. This person needs the authority and ability to mold the document into its final form, independently and without undue interference.

- ○ Watch for critical analysis through the "so what" questions in conjunction with the research and data collection. The major challenge is to turn the corner from a descriptive to an evaluative approach. Work with your sub-committee co-chairs and members to address this issue as soon as possible.

- ○ Address only the five Criteria for Accreditation in the Report; anything else can go either in the appendix or to the resource room as needed. Keep the padding out of the document!

- ○ Keep a positive tone in describing and analyzing the challenges by "telling it like it is" in a forthright, honest manner. The Report should present an institutional evaluation and analysis, and not be subject to any one person's perspective or viewpoint. Address the issues, and describe how they are being met.

- ○ Write for the third-party reader with clarity of organization, language, and readability. Avoid educational jargon, spell out acronyms in their initial presentation, and assume that the reader does not know the background information about any given situation. Use active rather than passive language, and keep the grammatical structure as clear as possible.

- ○ Identify people to review the Report and supporting documents to verify the findings. These reviewers should be the best people that the institution has to accomplish this important task.

- ○ Place the supporting documents in a central file, which moves to the resource room for the visit. By managing the document flow as it occurs, the organization of the resource room is easier to accomplish without a flurry of preparation before the visit.

- ○ Keep the sub-committee co-chairs on task, encouraging their best efforts. Meet with them regularly to evaluate their progress and resolve any issues before they become roadblocks. The success of the Report depends directly on the quality of the work done by the sub-committees.

- ○ Try to manage the "paper flow" electronically as much as possible. Even with this approach, the inundation of paper becomes an increasing challenge. Use technology, especially e-mail attachments and shared computer drives or web pages, to make the process easier to manage.

- ○ Maintain all deadlines while anticipating unexpected delays. Your timeline is a guide, but the project may unravel if you move too far from it. Despite your best efforts, allow for delays and things appearing out of nowhere that will take time to resolve.

- ○ Choose a graphic designer carefully so the Report presents information clearly and accurately. Carefully discuss each design detail so the Report is executed as planned. Do not assume that you and the designer understand each other without covering the details. Proof, proof, and proof again!

- ○ Using color can increase the professional look of the Report, but consider it with caution due to expense and how best to incorporate it.

- ○ Present your best image of the institution on the Report cover design, and the inside cover with an area reference and/or campus map. The team members will appreciate these items, and they help other readers to understand the location and other reference points of the institution.

- ○ Make backup copies of everything you produce. If not, plan to lose something that will be critical to the task.

- ○ Print at least half again as many copies of the Report as needed, and keep one in a secure place for last resort. Allow an adequate number of copies for the campus community and other interested stakeholders involved in the self-study, and for usage during the period leading to the next comprehensive visit.

- ○ Allow adequate time to produce the final copy [printing, assembly, binding, etc.] so the Report can be in the hands of the team members at least six weeks before the visit. Since these production aspects of the final copy may involve multiple vendors, this might be the point where things go wrong or experience delays.

☐ **Communication with Campus Constituencies and Stakeholders**

- ○ Continue to cultivate administrative support and keep the institutional management team appraised of your progress. Support by the executive leadership is critical to the entire project. The president/chancellor and the management team can be valuable allies in underlining the importance of the self-study to the campus community.

- ○ Update the campus community about progress through regular communication, such as memos, announcements, e-mails, newsletters, etc.
- ○ Provide access for the campus community to the Report drafts for proofing and review. This allows for the correction of errors and other writing issues to be addressed quickly. However, this campus review must be limited in time and scope so the self-study process can continue on schedule.
- ○ Maintain student involvement in the process. Although it may be challenging to keep students engaged in the self-study, they are an important constituency. The evaluation team will meet with students and evaluate their engagement with the institution in part by their involvement in the self-study.
- ○ Present Report summaries to the governing board, advisory committees, etc. Keep these stakeholders informed about the Report and its findings.
- ○ Consider a campus meeting or workshop to review the Report and discuss any outstanding issues. Provide a forum for the campus to consider the findings.

☐ **Implementation of the Third Party Comment Process**

- ○ Plan with the public relations/marketing office for the specifics of public comment, including newspaper announcements and letters to leaders in business, industry, community, government, schools, etc. The *Handbook of Accreditation* presents the requirements to be met. Allow adequate time for this part of the process to be done well before the actual visit.

☐ **Preparation of Campus Personnel and Facilities**

- ○ Prepare the campus community for the site visit–faculty, staff, students, and members of governing boards, advisory committees, organizations, etc. You will want campus personnel to know about the Report and the visit.
- ○ Formulate a plan to address physical facilities issues. Prepare carefully for this aspect of the visit and allow enough time to implement it. Now is not the time for the campus to engage in delayed or major maintenance and renovation. The campus, however, should sparkle!
- ○ Prepare a summary of the Report for distribution to the campus community. Although copies should be made available to all employees and stakeholders, it will help to prepare an executive summary of the Report and its findings.
- ○ Provide detailed schedules of the team visit to the entire campus community.

☐ **Planning for the Resource Room**

- ○ Plan the resource room from the perspective of the team members, including access to computers, copier, fax machine, e-mail, telephones, and staff support. Coordinate any special requirements with the team chair.
- ○ Organize the files and documents to allow easy access to information. Include a guide to the room and present the material in as consistent a format as possible.
- ○ Plan good quality and an adequate variety of food and refreshment for the resource room. Being a team member requires high energy.

☐ **Coordination with the Team Chair**

- ○ Make preliminary contact two months before the visit with the team chair to plan specifics. Since much of this coordination is the prerogative of the chair, be responsive to that direction.
- ○ Anticipate team needs by addressing them up front. From the perspective of a team member, you should be able to anticipate and address reasonable needs in preparation for the visit.

- ○ Send copies of the appendix materials to team members, and include additional copies in the resource room. The *Handbook* specifies the materials to include in the team mailing before the actual visit.

☐ **Final Details Before the Visit**

- ○ Review the materials and organization of the resource room. Walk through everything from the perspective of a team member. Does it make sense? Is it easily accessible? Are there any unanswered questions?
- ○ Walk around the campus with the eyes of a first-time visitor. How do the facilities appear at first glance? Is the general signage adequate? Are safety, health, and accessibility issues addressed?
- ○ Check final details, arrangements, and assignments to ensure a smooth visit. If need be, execute a dry run a few days before the visit to see if any issues arise.
- ○ Clear your own personal schedule for the duration of the visit so you can respond to the needs of the team.

☐ **Final Advice**

- ○ Expect the unexpected–it will happen. Remember, the best-laid plans...
- ○ Plan for a campus celebration immediately at the conclusion of the visit. No matter the outcome, the campus community should celebrate the completion of this project and the resources it demands. Do not allow this opportunity to go by unaddressed.
- ○ Be sure to thank everyone involved with the project, no matter how large or small their role, and acknowledge their contribution. People need to feel appreciated for what they have done, and the institution needs to thank them personally and publicly.
- ○ Plan how to use the outcomes of the visit to further the goals of the institution. The conclusions and next steps of the Report should help to guide what happens next. The self-study is not limited to the visit and a renewal of accreditation.
- ○ Plan some "time away" or other recognition for yourself–you will have earned it and need it. Discuss this issue with your direct supervisor and determine how best to address it. Your president/chancellor should be willing to deal with this item without much prompting.

Daniel P. Larson is Vice President for Academic Affairs at St. Charles County Community College in St. Peters, Missouri.

Mimi Elwell is Instructor of Mathematics at Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

Rebecca J. Burgart
Michael L. Knedler

The self-evaluation process mandated by the North Central Association for accreditation involves numerous steps, but for those midway through the process the two most significant tasks yet to be accomplished may be to produce the institutional Self-Study Report and prepare for the team visit. The self-study provides the team with its first and foremost introduction to your institution and must be truthful, concise, accurate, and presented with clarity. Equally, and perhaps more important, is the team visit through which the team members ascertain whether your institution is doing what it says it is doing and that it meets the minimum requirements established through the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) and five criteria. The role of the self-study coordinators is to facilitate the process. Iowa Western Community College successfully completed these two critical steps and was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years.

Producing the Self-Study

The Self-Study Report partially fulfills the requirements of the North Central Association for continued accreditation. Through the self-study process an institution discovers its strengths and challenges and then develops recommendations to address them. Through this process the institution develops a road map for the future.

In organizing, writing, and publishing the self-study document, the institution should do the following:

☐ **Organizing the Report**

- ○ Carefully plan the organization of the self-study document. It should be a reflection of your institution, as it is the team's introduction to your college.
- ○ Don't reinvent the wheel. If you find a model that you like, use it as a model for your self-study document.

☐ **Writing the Report**

- ○ Prepare and distribute a writing guide to each of the study committees. This guide should include format and instructions for writing, questions to consider, and components of evaluation that need to be considered.
- ○ Encourage the study teams to write evaluative reports that include the facts, an evaluation of the facts, evidence behind the evaluation, and actions that the institution can take as a result of the analysis.
- ○ The self-study should have a positive tone and keep the focus on improving the institution, especially when addressing difficult issues.
- ○ Combine the study committee reports into one cohesive document so that it appears to have been written by one person. This is a very time consuming process, so allow time to complete it.
- ○ Have others read the draft copy for accuracy and clarity.
- ○ Edit, edit, edit.

☐ **Publishing the Report**

- ○ Use the expertise on your campus. Have someone who is has expertise in desktop publishing who can help with the layout of the document including font, type size, headings, and use of white space.

- Choose a cover that represents your college.
- Work closely with the printing personnel on paper selection and binding.

Above all have fun writing the document, and where possible bring in humor. Stay flexible in responding to changes. Writing the self-study requires significant time and involves people with different learning styles and differing points of view. Allow plenty of time to complete the project.

The Visit

Preparation for the team visit involves a variety of tasks that must be completed prior to and during the visit. This preparation includes reserving hotel rooms, planning meals, setting up meetings, and responding to specific requests of the team chair or team members. In many respects the most important element of the visit preparation is the organization of the resource room. The resource room is key to providing effortless access to all of the information the evaluation team may want or need to complete its tasks.

In preparing for the visit, the self-study coordinators should do the following:

- Assure that travel, lodging, and meeting arrangements are made.
- Keep the campus community informed about the team visit, what to expect, and how the process works.
- Familiarize yourself with the team members, their current positions, educational background, and information concerning the environment in which their education institutions operate.
- Plan, develop, and create the Resource Room. This room should be in a centralized location that will give the team space to work and meet. Anticipate the needs of the team by including computers, phones, phone directories, work space, and support personnel. Resources should be organized in an easily accessible manner.
- Stay flexible and expect the unexpected. Things that may be new to you, such as protests or individuals trying to derail the process, are not new to team members.
- Relax and enjoy the interaction with the evaluation team members. After all, their purpose is to help make your institution better.

These suggestions will help the visit go smoothly.

Conclusion

The NCA evaluation of institutions is a process that allows an institution to take a critical look at what it does. The product of this process is a self-study document and a NCA team visit. It is a process that involves many people and tasks and can provide the institution with important and useful information for use in the future.

Rebecca J. Burgart is Associate Dean for the School of Applied Science and Technology at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs.

Michael L. Knedler is Coordinator of the Social Science and Public Services Department at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs.

If We Knew Then What We Know Now

Nancy C. Kolakowsky
Carol A. Maddin

After a great deal of reflection on the frustrations expressed by many of our study groups, we would propose a different approach to the self-study process than the one we utilized. Though our study groups, organized by NCA criteria, were motivated and enthusiastic about the project, they lacked sufficient direction to produce the desired criterion reports in a timely fashion. Many efforts were duplicated by more than one group while some topics were totally neglected. Meanwhile, the Criterion Four group was stymied awaiting the completion of other portions of the self-study.

If your institution intends to include broad constituency participation in the self-study process, the role of the steering committee will be crucial. Careful planning, organization, and direction by the Steering Committee will greatly reduce frustrations and enhance productivity. If we were beginning the process again, we would have the steering committee determine how the Self-Study Report should be organized and develop an initial outline of all topics to be analyzed. For each area, the steering committee would identify a set of broad, general questions. The questions would enable the steering committee to develop a detailed study guide for each study group including an initial outline, detailed topical questions to be investigated, possible resources to be utilized, timelines to be followed, and formatting guidelines. Posing the correct questions for each study group will promote investigation and analysis rather than descriptions. Study groups would be encouraged to identify additional issues to investigate. We offer the following broad, general questions as a beginning discourse for consideration by your steering committee. This list includes questions that apply to most institutions; it is by no means exhaustive. Because each institution is unique, your steering committee will need to identify many additional questions to address.

☐ **Mission and Purposes**

- ○ Are your institution's mission and purposes clear, consistent, and measurable?
- ○ Does your mission state that you are an institution of higher education?
- ○ Do your purposes reflect your focus on student learning?
- ○ Are your purposes aligned with state and national standards?
- ○ Are your mission and purposes readily accessible to and understood by your constituents?
- ○ How has support for them been demonstrated?

☐ **Governance, Administration, Organizational Structure, Policy and Procedures**

- ○ How do you assess the effectiveness of your governing board, administration, and organizational structure?
- ○ What are the qualifications of your governing board members and administrators?
- ○ Do your constituents clearly understand the "chain of command" and organizational structure of your institution?
- ○ How effective is your Policies and Procedures Manual in providing clear, appropriate, and dependable direction for institutional activities?

- ○ How can you analyze the degree to which your organizational structure promotes and values participation by all constituents?
- ○ How effective is your internal and external communication of issues and decisions?

☐ **Human Resources**

- ○ Is your student profile (gender, ethnicity, and age) appropriate for your institution's mission and purposes?
- ○ What do demographic trends and enrollment patterns indicate regarding future needs?
- ○ Is your employee profile (gender, ethnicity, and age) appropriate for your institution's mission and purposes?
- ○ How will you determine if your institution has appropriate staffing to accomplish your stated purposes?
- ○ Do your faculty and staff meet or exceed the minimum qualifications for the positions they hold?
- ○ How can you project future staffing needs and analyze your ability to meet these needs?

☐ **Financial Resources**

- ○ Does your institution have adequate funding sources to meet current and projected needs?
- ○ Does your institution meet national recommendations to enhance financial stability by maintaining adequate reserves to meet revenue shortfalls or unexpected emergency expenditures?
- ○ Are your financial resources allocated to support your institution's mission and purposes?
- ○ Do your assessment and planning processes effectively drive your budget development process and expenditures?
- ○ Are your expenditures by function and cost per FTE in line with similar institutions?
- ○ Are you accounts maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and practices?
- ○ Do recent audits by external agencies indicate strong financial management?
- ○ Does your budget administration process provide ample monitoring, control, and accountability?

☐ **Physical Resources**

- ○ Do your physical facilities adequately support your mission and purposes?
- ○ How will you assess effective utilization of facilities?
- ○ Do your facilities provide safe, secure, accessible, and comfortable learning and working environments?
- ○ To what extent does your institution provide and plan for energy efficiency, appropriate maintenance, and aesthetics?
- ○ Is institutional support for transportation appropriate?
- ○ Are mail/delivery and printing/duplicating services efficient and effective?
- ○ Do your technology systems effectively support the functions of your institution?
- ○ Does your institution have ample, accessible, and reliable computer resources for students and staff?
- ○ Is technology training and support adequate?
- ○ Do your library resources meet or exceed national standards and institutional needs?
- ○ Is your library collection development policy aligned with your institutional purposes and budget planning processes?

- ○ Does your inventory control system provide the necessary information regarding location, status, and projected replacement costs of property?
- ○ Does your institution have a viable plan to replace lost or damaged physical resources?
- ○ How is your institution positioned to meet future facility, transportation, institutional and instructional support, and technology needs?

☐ **Educational and Other Purposes**

- ○ Is your general education philosophy clearly defined, understood by constituents, and reviewed periodically?
- ○ Is the general education curriculum aligned with your philosophy, appropriate to an institution of higher education, consistent with state and national standards, reviewed periodically, and routinely assessed?
- ○ Is the curriculum within your degree and certificate programs current, consistent with the curriculum at similar institutions, and routinely reviewed?
- ○ Do programs meet professional standards and adequately prepare students for employment or future studies?
- ○ Do you have students enrolled in all programs?
- ○ Is your student academic achievement plan faculty driven and to what extent are the results utilized to improve instruction and learning?
- ○ Do faculty maintain grading standards that accurately reflect student learning and does the institution issue transcripts that follow generally accepted practices?
- ○ How effective is your institution in facilitating student attainment of degrees, certificates, and/or transfer?
- ○ Do institutional agreements or partnerships with educational and other external agencies accomplish the intended purposes?
- ○ To what extent does your institution enhance student success through accessible and comprehensive student support services?
- ○ How do you assess the effectiveness of distance learning systems?
- ○ How do you assess the unique purposes of your institution?

☐ **Institutional Effectiveness**

- ○ Does your institution have a comprehensive institutional effectiveness plan formally linking your mission and purposes and your evaluation, planning, and implementation processes?
- ○ To what degree are all appropriate college constituents involved in the evaluation, planning, and implementation processes?
- ○ Does your institutional effectiveness plan provide accountability and timelines for institutional planning, implementation, and evaluation?
- ○ Does it demonstrate institutional commitment to ongoing assessment and to strengthening the effectiveness of college programs and services?

☐ **Integrity**

- ○ Are your institution's written policies and procedures easily accessible, clear and comprehensive, reflective of ethical values, and consistent with practice?
- ○ Do policies and practices comply with all applicable Federal and State laws, consistently provide equity of treatment and nondiscrimination, and encourage a diverse educational community?
- ○ Are your institutional student and employee grievance processes effective in settling disputes?

- ○ Are your published materials comprehensive, readable, useful, and consistent with practices?
- ○ Are your recruitment, hiring, and orientation practices forthright, honest, and inclusive?
- ○ Are relationships with internal constituents conducted with respect, honesty, and candor?
- ○ Are relationships with educational or other external agencies conducted ethically and responsibly?
- ○ Are processes established and personnel accountable for ensuring compliance with contractual agreements?

After the steering committee members have developed a comprehensive, non-overlapping set of study guides, they would turn their attention to the formation of study groups. The study guides would provide direction for the composition of study groups. Each study group should be composed of members with one or more of the following qualities: expertise in the area to be studied, analytical skills, research skills, and writing skills. Diversity in employee status, service areas, gender, and longevity of service should be considered in the formation of the groups. And last, but not least, group members must have a proven record of productivity and ability to maintain objectivity.

Orientation for study groups should provide the purposes of the self-study, the plan for accomplishing the desired evaluative study, the proposed format for the completed comprehensive study, and the appropriate study guide. With this direction, the study groups will be able to begin their data collection, analysis, and evaluation.

If we knew than what we know now, we would have initiated this process a year earlier than we did. Frustrations would have been greatly reduced, productivity would have been greatly enhanced, and our Self-Study Report would have been more concise, less descriptive, and more evaluative.

Nancy C. Kolakowsky is Chair of the Mathematics Department and Instructor at Northland Pioneer College in Holbrook, Arizona.

Carol A. Maddin is Coordinator of Academic Advising at Northland Pioneer College in Holbrook, Arizona.

QUEST FOR QUALITY

MISSION,
THE COMMISSION
AND
A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 12

Practical Advice on Self-Study

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Using the Institutional Plan for Self-Study to Accomplish a Purposeful, Meaningful, and Successful Self-Study Process

Patricia L. Ziegler

Introduction

What an exciting day!! Your president invites you to a meeting in his or her office and begins discussing the NCA continued accreditation visit that has been scheduled at your institution in two years. Your president goes on to ask if you would be willing to serve as the Self-Study Coordinator for this important effort. "Wow!" you say to yourself. "What an honor!"

That feeling of elation lasts for about two days...and then panic sets in!! Where do you begin? What do you do first? You know that a tremendous amount of research must be conducted, that data must be compiled, and that a comprehensive report must be written. How will you ever get it all done, while maintaining the day-to-day business of the college? Who will help? How much involvement can you expect from other faculty and staff? What are the pitfalls that you should avoid? In short, how can you get from here to there, from now to then, without losing your sanity?! How can you lead your campus through a meaningful process of self study?

While most self-study coordinators are familiar with the accreditation process, the task of actually leading the process...from start to finish...can be overwhelming. This pre-conference workshop on self-study will outline how one institution used the Institutional Plan for Self-Study as the basis for the entire process. The Plan provided the framework for the journey of self-study at the American Institute of Business located in Des Moines, Iowa.

Institutional Background

AIB is an independent, nonprofit, coeducational two-year college of business. The college, in operation since 1921, has maintained an enrollment of approximately 1000 students over the last ten years, with programs in accounting, business administration, computers (IBM AS/400 and MCSE), court reporting, office administration, and travel. AIB received NCA candidacy status in 1984. A three-year initial accreditation was granted by NCA in 1986. In 1989, the college was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. An accreditation visit was scheduled for April 1999 wherein the college again was granted continued accreditation with the next review in ten years.

Significant changes in the leadership of the college occurred just prior to and during the self-study process. In 1994, the Executive Vice President of the college for nearly 20 years retired. In 1996, the Vice President and Academic Dean of the college for nearly 20 years accepted another position in the Chicago area. In November 1996, the Board of Trustees appointed a new Executive Vice President, a new Vice President/Dean of Admissions Services, and a new Vice President/Academic Dean. These three individuals, along with the president of 40+ years and the Vice President/Treasurer formed the new leadership team. In August 1998, the President announced his retirement, effective December 31, 1998. A new President was appointed by the Board of Trustees in November 1998, along with a new Vice President/Dean of Administrative Services.

Throughout this time of administrative change, transition also occurred among faculty and staff. The turnover rate was higher than the college had experienced. This worried some long-time employees and was of concern as the campus prepared for the NCA team visit in April 1999.

During this time of self-study, other major changes took place on campus: significant curriculum changes were implemented, including an entirely new class schedule and revision to all majors. The computer network was upgraded several times, from Windows 3.1 to Windows 95 to Windows 98. Plans were underway for the construction of a new $5 million Activities Center. The campus culture was changing.

The Vice President/Academic Dean was appointed the self-study coordinator in November 1996, just six months after arriving on campus as the new dean. At that time, the college NCA liaison was Dr. M. Jane Hunter, serving on an interim basis for one year. Dr. Hunter was extremely helpful in establishing the Plan and providing thoughtful suggestions on initiating the process. Dr. John Taylor, the permanent NCA liaison for the college, continued to provide very strong leadership and guidance to AIB throughout the process.

Outline of the Workshop

Discussion at this pre-conference workshop will cover the following ten topics:

1. Establishing the Institutional Plan for Self-Study
2. Creating the table of contents
3. Organizing the steering team
4. Building the committee structure
5. Conducting the research
6. Writing the Report
7. Preparing the exhibits
8. Enduring "The Wait"
9. Surviving the NCA team visit!
10. Celebrating after the visit!

☐ Step One. Establishing the Institutional Plan for Self-Study

The Institutional Plan for Self-Study served as the framework for the entire self-study process. The Plan at AIB consisted of the following sections:

- Purposes of Institutional Self-Study
- Process of Institutional Self-Study
    - Initiate the Self-Study
    - Organization of the Self-Study
        - Role of the Self-Study Coordinator
        - Role of the Steering Team members
        - Steering Team membership
        - Mission Statement of the NCA Self-Study Steering Team
        - Role of subcommittees
        - Subcommittee structure
        - Timeline for completion
- Resources for Self-Study

  - Current institutional documents and reports
  - Surveys and questionnaires
  - Interview of the college community and its constituents
- ○ Outline of the Self-Study Report
  - Part I–Introduction
  - Part II–General Institutional Requirements
  - Part III–Criterion One
  - Part IV–Criterion Two
  - Part V–Criterion Three
  - Part VI–Criterion Four
  - Part VII–Criterion Five
  - Part VIII–The Federal Compliance Program
  - Part IX–Summary
  - Part X–Formal Request for Continued Accreditation
  - Appendices

Note: The Institutional Plan for Self-Study will be available in its entirety at the Pre-Conference Workshop.

☐ Step Two. Creating the Table of Contents

This was an important step in the process. Steering team leadership and subcommittee assignments were determined based on the structure of the table of contents. Some alterations were made to the table of contents once the subcommittees began their research and study. It is important to ensure that decisions be made early in the process regarding subcommittee assignments so that research is not duplicated between subcommittees. There is no absolute right or wrong way to segment these topics; each institution will determine the appropriate breakdown based on the organizational structure of the college and the makeup of the steering team.

A condensed Table of Contents for the AIB Self-Study follows:

Part I. Introduction

Chapter 1 AIB and Its Community
- History of AIB
- Community Profile
- College Profile
- Student Profile

Chapter 2 NCA Accreditation
- Responses to 1989 Visit

Chapter 3 NCA Self-Study for Continued Accreditation
- Purpose and Organization of Self-Study
- Description of Self-Study Process
- Committees

Chapter 4 Summary of Evaluative Data

Part II. General Institutional Requirements

- Mission
- Authority
- Governance

Faculty
Educational Programs
Finances
Public Information

Part III. **Criterion One.** *"The institutional has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education."*

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Mission Statement

Chapter 3 Purposes

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Part IV. **Criterion Two.** *"The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes."*

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Organization and Governance

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 3 Human Resources

Faculty
Staff
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 4 Financial Resources

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 5 Physical Resources

Buildings
Electronic Network
Adequacy of Facilities
Facility Safety
Library
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Part V. **Criterion Three.** *"The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes."*

Chapter 1 Introduction to Descriptive Chapters

Educational Purposes
Degree and Diploma Programs
General Education Philosophy
Continuing Education Philosophy
Corporate Education Philosophy
AIB-Graceland College Partnership Program
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 2 Introduction to Evaluative Chapters

Assessment of Student Outcomes
Assessment Plan
*Strengths

*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 3 Teaching Practices

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 4 Student Services

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 5 Admission Policy

Graduation Rates/Cohort Rate
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Part VI. **Criterion Four.** *"The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness."*

Chapter 1 Introduction and History

Chapter 2 Strategic Planning

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 3 Looking Ahead...Positioning for the Future

AIB Foundation
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 4 Curriculum Planning

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Part VII. **Criterion Five.** *"The institutional demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships."*

Chapter 1 Introduction

Hiring Practices
Employee Gender and Ethnic Makeup
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 2 Published Policies and Procedures

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 3 Manuals and Handbooks

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 4 Institutional Policies–Faculty/Staff

Student Policies
*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Chapter 5 Relationship with External Publics

*Strengths
*Opportunities for Improvement

Part VIII. The Federal Compliance Program

Chapter 1 Credits, Program Length, and Tuition
Institutional Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act

Chapter 2 Institution's Advertising and Recruitment Materials
Professional Accreditation

Part IX. Summary

Part X. Formal Request for Continued Accreditation

Appendices

Note: The Table of Contents is available in its entirety in the Institutional Plan for Self-Study.

☐ Step Three. Organizing the Steering Team

This was a critical step in the process. Key individuals on campus, representative of both faculty and staff, were selected to lead the self-study process. AIB chose to appoint co-chairpersons for each of the five criteria, creating an eleven-member steering team (including the coordinator). This proved to be very effective, especially for those criteria that are multi-faceted (#2 and #3). Having co-chairs also allowed a sharing of the burden, which seemed to ease the fear and trepidation that accompanies this type of responsibility. Issues of compensation should be addressed early in the process, depending on the culture and climate of your institution. All eleven members of the AIB Self-Study Steering Team attended an NCA Annual Meeting together. This is highly recommended. Not only did all members begin to understand their criterion better, but they also bonded and began to develop a sense of team spirit.

The Plan provided the foundation for the steering team by stating:

- ○ the purposes of the self-study,
- ○ the process of the self-study,
- ○ the organization of the self-study,
- ○ the role of the steering team members (including a job description), and
- ○ the mission statement for the steering team.

☐ Step Four. Building the Committee Structure

The committee structure will depend on the size and culture of your institution. At AIB, this self-study process was deemed a very high priority, from the president of the institution throughout the entire organization. All full-time faculty and staff members, as well as many part-time faculty and staff members, were invited to participate on a subcommittee. This opportunity provided positive experiences for the majority of employees. There were numerous leadership opportunities available for employees, by serving as chair or co-chair of one of the numerous work groups or subcommittees for each of the five criteria. Everyone learned much about the institution by being involved in the process. Again, a sense of camaraderie and team spirit evolved.

☐ Step Five. Conducting the Research

Some institutions spend twelve months or longer gathering the data and conducting research. At AIB, this process took approximately six months. A specific table of contents was helpful in this step. The steering team members utilized the table of contents for their criteria and performed research accordingly.

A decision should be made early in this step about the types of surveys to administer. Surveys should be combined whenever possible, so that the college constituencies are not overburdened with repetitive surveys. Regular steering team meetings are important during this time in order to keep co-chairs in constant communication.

The Self-Study Coordinator should provide specific guidelines to steering team members regarding the expectations for format and degree of completeness for each criterion. A timeline was established for submission of the first draft report to the Self-Study Coordinator.

☐ Step Six. Writing the Self-Study Report

During the research period, the Self-Study Coordinator began working on the preliminary chapters of the Report. These chapters included the Introduction (Part I) and the General Institutional Requirements (Part II).

The first chapter, which included an institutional overview, history of NCA accreditation, and summary of the purpose and organization of the self-study, also contained a "Summary of Evaluative Data." Numerous surveys were administered throughout the self-study process. This summary contained specific information on each of the surveys, including a summary of each survey, the process followed for each survey, the number of participants in each survey, and the exhibit number for each survey. This was an effective method for handling the volume of survey instruments referenced in the Report.

A format for the Report was established early in the process. Once that format was determined, organizing and inputting the information was easier. Throughout the Report, evaluative data were included. Information from the various surveys was referenced in many segments of every chapter. Patterns of evidence were included to support the descriptive information. Subcommittee members were encouraged to incorporate evaluative data in their reports. The Self-Study Coordinator also incorporated supporting data from these surveys throughout the Report. Drafts of the criterion chapters were returned to the steering team and subcommittee members as the Report was compiled. This allowed subcommittee members to maintain ownership of their criterion throughout Step Six.

Throughout the Report, the Self-Study Coordinator included highlights of important information in captioned boxes in the margins of the document. These "captions of information" were well-received by the campus community and the NCA evaluation team.

At the conclusion of those chapters that included a criterion (Chapters 3-8), strengths and concerns were listed. (The Table of Contents initially listed these as "Opportunities for Improvement." The change was made to "Concerns" when the Report was written.) These items summarized the information documented by the subcommittees. The summary information was informational and summative for the campus community and the board of trustees, as well as the NCA evaluation team.

Proofreading the Report can be an overwhelming task. Not only did the Self-Study Coordinator proofread each page and chapter several times, but two administrative support members also proofread it. The president of the college read the final draft. The Self-Study Coordinator made the corrections and proofread the report once again. Coordinators need to be reminded that **"Excellence"** is the goal. Given the magnitude of the report and the numerous individuals involved, **"Perfection"** may not be a reality!

☐ Step Seven. Preparing the Exhibits

A listing of all exhibits was included as a separate chapter in the Report. Steering team members facilitated gathering the exhibits for their criterion whenever possible. The exhibits were physically labeled and organized in file boxes according to the appropriate chapter referenced in the Report. The file boxes were placed in the Resource Room. An alphabetic listing of the exhibits was prepared for use by the NCA team members. This proved to be a helpful tool when the team members arrived on campus and needed to have quick access to a particular exhibit.

☐ Step Eight. Enduring the "The Wait"

Once the Report was written and sent to the printer, "The Wait" began. During this time, the AIB campus community participated in several events to prepare for the visit. An e-mail "NCA Quiz" was conducted. This quiz included 20 questions that were deemed important for the community to know. Many individuals participated in the quiz; answers were provided via e-mail, so all campus members received the information. Prizes were distributed to the winners.

A Faculty/Staff Collaboration meeting was devoted to preparing for the NCA visit. A game show was conducted to help the campus community become better informed. A festive mood was the goal; the process was complete, and everyone had done an outstanding job.

The Self-Study Coordinator wrote an Update to the Report during this time. The Update provided additional information on changes that had taken place on campus in the months since the Report had been written. The Update was forwarded to the NCA team members along with the Report six weeks prior to the visit.

☐ Step Nine. Surviving the NCA Team Visit

Communication with the chair of the team was very important in making arrangements for the team visit. Various meeting times were established for faculty, staff, steering team, and board of trustees members to interact with the team members. Specific requests or requirements of the team members were communicated to the Self-Study Coordinator. The college took advantage of the opportunity to utilize the four team members as consultants, as well as evaluators.

The Self-Study Coordinator should expect to take a "back seat" during the visit. The team members wanted to visit with the members of the campus community. The role of the Coordinator was simply to coordinate the visit and to provide any additional information requested by the team members. It was also a good time to collaborate with these experienced educators on issues that were of common interest.

☐ Step Ten. Celebrating After the Visit!

At AIB, a Faculty/Staff Meeting was scheduled for late afternoon on the last day of the visit. Prior to this meeting, the team members had conducted an Exit Session with the officers of the college, where they shared their recommendation: continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. The team members also noted that two progress reports would be recommended: An assessment progress report in two years and a strategic planning progress report in three years.

The president of the college read this recommendation at the Faculty/Staff Meeting. The entire campus community was congratulated for the very fine efforts put forth. The NCA team gave special commendation to the maintenance staff for the fine appearance of the campus. The entire campus community celebrated the accomplishment of the recommendation for continued accreditation.

Summary

The self-study process was very beneficial to American Institute of Business. The process was laborious at times and included many, many hours of research, writing, and planning. The outcome was very positive–the college did receive continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. However, the positive outcome went much beyond the accreditation recommendation.

This self-study process bonded the campus community and provided opportunities for everyone to grow both professionally and personally. The process provided a forum for concerns to be voiced; many of these concerns were addressed during the process, and solutions were implemented. The process also provided a wonderful opportunity for all constituencies to focus on and build upon the many strengths of the college.

The entire process was, indeed, purposeful, meaningful, and successful.

Patricia Ziegler is Vice President and Academic Dean of the American Institute of Business in Des Moines, Iowa.

Transitioning from NCA's Traditional Model to the New AQIP Model: One Institution's Process

Laura D. Browne
Cindy Green

Who Is Iowa Valley Community College District?

Iowa Valley Community College District, located in central Iowa, is a multi-college institution comprised of four distinctive units: Ellsworth Community College (ECC) in Iowa Falls; Marshalltown Community College (MCC), Iowa Valley Continuing Education (IVCE), and the Iowa Valley District Office (D) in Marshalltown. The District Office is the administrative unit and Iowa Valley Continuing Education is the unit that offers a variety of non-credit courses to individuals, businesses and industry, and organizations in a four-country area (Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek and Tama). The credit-granting units (MCC and ECC) are semi-autonomous and uniquely different; both are open-door institutions, and both have established strong traditions of education within the community.

Ellsworth Community College was founded by Eugene S. Ellsworth in 1890 as a business academy. During its more than one hundred years of operation, it has been a four-year private college, a music conservatory, and now a comprehensive community college. Marshalltown Community College, founded in 1927 as Marshalltown Junior College, was a part of the Marshalltown Community School District. In 1966 in compliance with laws enacted by the 1965 Iowa Legislature to provide postsecondary education in the State of Iowa, ECC and MCC moved under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Valley Community College District (Merged Area VI).

Prior to 1996, both ECC and MCC maintained separate North Central accreditations. During the NCA evaluation team's 1996 focused visit with MCC, discontinuance of separate NCA evaluations was recommended; because "organizational structure and functioning at the individual campus level" was difficult to separate. Shortly thereafter, the Iowa Department of Education (DOE) also recommended that both colleges (MCC and ECC) and IVCE be accredited jointly noting in their report the need for "stronger, more consistent movement toward district-wide operation."

One of the first steps Iowa Valley took to comply with NCA and DOE recommendations for unity was the implementation of Total Quality Management principles. Iowa Valley's commitment to quality improvement led to a decision to model our upcoming NCA self-study after the Baldrige Criteria for Excellence in Education and NCA's proposed Academic Quality Improvement Process (AQIP) model because both emphasize continuous quality improvement.

History of Quality Improvement at Iowa Valley

Iowa Valley's early quality improvement efforts were relatively small scale, focusing on somewhat simple issues. Still, Iowa Valley received the Governor's Quality Coalition Award in recognition of its positive results. This solidified our commitment to Total Quality Management and quality improvement groups became desired vehicles for institutional change. An intricate part of each team's process was a forty-five hour educational component. Since that time, more than 16 TQM teams have reviewed and recommended improvements within the broad areas of recruitment and retention, budget and planning, evaluation/planning/curriculum, and internal relations. Specifically, these teams have recommended changes to improve the following: budget and curriculum development, internal and external communication, distance learning opportunities, student recruitment and retention, employee wellness, data collection/reporting/analysis, and unify district marketing efforts.

The Transition to AQIP

A TQM team comprised of faculty and administration developed the process Iowa Valley would use to complete its self-study in preparation for the NCA re-accreditation visit in 2001-2002. Those team members attended NCA's 104th Annual Meeting charged with obtaining information that would be useful for this, our first joint re-accreditation. The TQM team returned hoping to merge Iowa Valley's quality improvement initiatives with NCA's Baldrige Criteria-based AQIP model. Given the successes of quality improvement-driven institutional change at Iowa Valley, the team recognized the value of a continuous re-accreditation process (AQIP).

Quickly, the original TQM team was expanded to include one faculty/staff member from each unit (co-coordinators), public relations professionals, campus and academic deans, and all senior level administrators. This expanded team, re-named the "NCA-AQIP Steering Committee," seized this opportunity to implement a self-study PROCESS that would remain a viable guide for change long after the NCA visit. Making the administrative decision to adopt the AQIP model was a first step; however, the Steering Committee recognized that the college as a whole needed to have confidence in this new model of accreditation.

One would think that extensive TQM process success would result in an easy buy-in for the use of TQM principles to complete a self-study; however, we encountered entrenched reluctance. Introduction of the process and pro-active acknowledgment of concerns and questions that might impede district-wide employee buy-in were the focus of summer planning efforts. The seven Baldrige Criteria were finessed into Iowa Valley's seven NCA-AQIP teams:

- leadership/advancement
- strategic planning
- human resources
- information and analysis
- student services
- finance/facilities management
- educational design and delivery

Description of each team's area of analysis was expanded to include the Student and Stakeholder focus. A summer payroll stuffer provided these descriptions and the opportunity for all employees to select the team whose focus was consistent with their areas of expertise. A month later, at our fall staff development day, a humorous skit involving all NCA-AQIP steering committee members kicked off our NCA-AQIP self-study process. That same day, the first team meetings were held and leaders and recorders were selected.

A month later, training for team leaders and recorders was held. The advantages of the AQIP process were explained and the *Pacesetter: Starter Guide for Educational Excellence* was introduced. Each Steering Committee member was assigned to serve as liaison to one of the teams in order to create a two-way information sharing process. An electronic resource room enhanced in-house communications about this new re-accreditation process. Employees could access Iowa Valley's NCA-AQIP web page and see the composition and responsibilities of all teams, minutes of their meetings as well as PowerPoint presentations of all NCA-related district-wide training programs. In addition, links to NCA's AQIP web page were created for those individuals desiring more in-depth information about the process.

What have We Learned?

The NCA-AQIP Steering Committee believes the AQIP model has the potential to change institutional culture at Iowa Valley. Currently, teams are identifying the day to day operational processes to ensure that the District accomplishes its mission, especially in the areas of strategic planning and assessment. We have learned a great deal about these operational processes. However, this has not been without its challenges. Some teams are struggling because describing **what** we do is much easier than identifying **how** we do it. Other teams have successfully identified the **"how's"** but are reluctant to acknowledge inefficiency and ineffectiveness because change would be necessary. In addition, there is a sense of disbelief that this new process could have any real impact on the way Iowa Valley will do business because this is the first clear linkage between continuous institutional change and re-accreditation. Some question whether empowering teams to identify and recommend changes to district-wide processes will be successful because it is such a radical departure from the traditional self-study completed by designated individuals in strategic leadership positions.

Conclusion

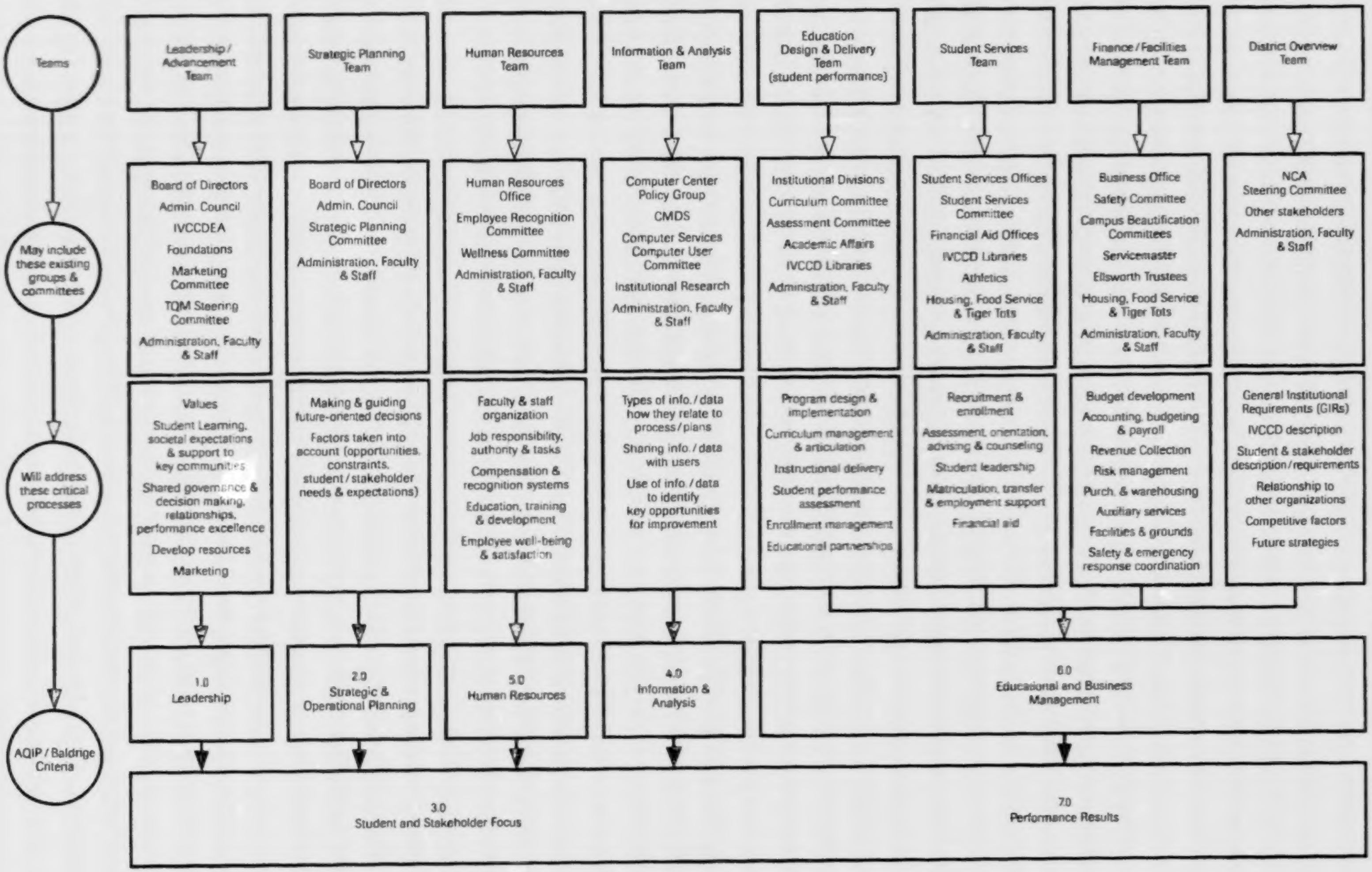
Even after encountering initial difficulties, the teams continue to meet and many are ready to begin writing their section of the self-study. The NCA-AQIP Steering Committee remains committed to the AQIP model. However, this is only the beginning of Iowa Valley's journey to re-accreditation. We are still one to two years out and the AQIP model has just been released. We hope you will stay tuned for the sequel scheduled to appear at an NCA Annual Meeting near you in the near future.

Laura D. Browne is Associate Dean of Developmental Services at Iowa Valley Community College District in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Cindy Green is Dean of Instruction at Marshalltown Community College in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Transitioning from NCA's Traditional Model to the New AQIP Model: One Institution's Process

Appendix



Teams	Leadership / Advancement Team	Strategic Planning Team	Human Resources Team	Information & Analysis Team	Education Design & Delivery Team (student performance)	Student Services Team	Finance / Facilities Management Team	District Overview Team
May include these existing groups & committees	Board of Directors Admin. Council IVCCDEA Foundations Marketing Committee TQM Steering Committee Administration, Faculty & Staff	Board of Directors Admin. Council Strategic Planning Committee Administration, Faculty & Staff	Human Resources Office Employee Recognition Committee Wellness Committee Administration, Faculty & Staff	Computer Center Policy Group CMDS Computer Services Computer User Committee Institutional Research Administration, Faculty & Staff	Institutional Divisions Curriculum Committee Assessment Committee Academic Affairs IVCCD Libraries Administration, Faculty & Staff	Student Services Offices Student Services Committee Financial Aid Offices IVCCD Libraries Athletics Housing, Food Service & Tiger Tots Administration, Faculty & Staff	Business Office Safety Committee Campus Beautification Committees Servicemaster Ellsworth Trustees Housing, Food Service & Tiger Tots Administration, Faculty & Staff	NCA Steering Committee Other stakeholders Administration, Faculty & Staff
Will address these critical processes	Values Student Learning, societal expectations & support to key communities Shared governance & decision making, relationships, performance excellence Develop resources Marketing	Making & guiding future-oriented decisions Factors taken into account (opportunities, constraints, student / stakeholder needs & expectations)	Faculty & staff organization Job responsibility, authority & tasks Compensation & recognition systems Education, training & development Employee well-being & satisfaction	Types of info. / data how they relate to process / plans Sharing info. / data with users Use of info. / data to identify key opportunities for improvement	Program design & implementation Curriculum management & articulation Instructional delivery Student performance assessment Enrollment management Educational partnerships	Recruitment & enrollment Assessment, orientation, advising & counseling Student leadership Matriculation, transfer & employment support Financial aid	Budget development Accounting, budgeting & payroll Revenue Collection Risk management Purch. & warehousing Auxiliary services Facilities & grounds Safety & emergency response coordination	General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) IVCCD description Student & stakeholder description / requirements Relationship to other organizations Competitive factors Future strategies
AQIP / Baldrige Criteria	1.0 Leadership	2.0 Strategic & Operational Planning	5.0 Human Resources	4.0 Information & Analysis	6.0 Educational and Business Management			
	3.0 Student and Stakeholder Focus				7.0 Performance Results			

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Fostering Employee Ownership in the Self-Study Process through Committee Empowerment

Deb Jones
Nancy Schendel

Introduction

Committees designed around their self-study topics will be more successful in the study process if their membership consists of a variety of employee classifications. Committee success is also dependent on the depth of ownership the committee members accept for their part of the self-study process. Thus, crucial to the success of an institution's self-study process are employee driven committees with active involvement from all employee classifications within the institution.

From the perspective and experience of past steering committee members, this paper will discuss techniques for the design of self-study committees that were proven effective and successful for a community college. It will also include a discussion of techniques used during the self-study process by the committees to enhance their effectiveness. Practical tips will be provided.

Effective Early Decisions Lay the Groundwork

Iowa Lakes Community College is a multi-campus college located in rural northwestern Iowa with main campuses in Estherville and Emmetsburg. The college has three other centers located in Spencer, Spirit Lake, and Algona. The geographical layout of the college added challenges to the self-study process. With a new president and administrative team, Iowa Lakes Community College was facing many changes and heading into new territories.

Essential for the self-study process is an effectively designed committee structure that will deal with the various challenges of the institution. It was critical to this community college that the steering committee embrace the new changes at Iowa Lakes while respecting the college's history and geographic challenges.

College administrative personnel at Iowa Lakes Community College decided to structure the Steering Committee around the five Criteria for Accreditation provided by NCA. Specific guidelines used by Iowa Lakes when selecting Steering Committee members included:

- select college employees with mid to long term years of service, without previous major NCA involvement
- utilize all employee classifications and geographic locations
- select college employees who are respected as leaders among their college peers
- provide the opportunity for attendance of all members at the NCA Annual Meeting prior to self-study preparation

Using an effectively designed criteria based committee structure, Iowa Lakes was able to achieve continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled in ten years.

Subcommittee Design Builds Strong Foundation for Self-Study

At Iowa Lakes, two chairs for each criterion were responsible for designing the committees needed for the self-study process for their particular criterion. They named the committees and wrote a short description of the nature of the committee and the task of the committee for the self-study process.

A letter of invitation was then sent to all employees of the college describing the importance of the accreditation process and asking everyone to consider membership on at least one committee. The committee names and the brief descriptions were included in the mailing on an easy check off form. There were no barriers for committee selection. Any employee could choose to sign up for any subcommittee. Employees were asked for their top three choices. They were also asked if they would consider accepting responsibility for chairing the committee they selected.

The returned check-off forms were compiled and given to the steering committee chairs. The subcommittees were formed based on the volunteer selection by the various employees. The steering committee members selected one of the members initially to chair that particular subcommittee. It was decided that they might have better response in the subcommittees if the members could elect their own chair.

Using this process, 67% of college personnel were members on various committees and 92% participated in the overall self-study process. This high level of participation and the fact that all employee classifications participated contributed to a comprehensive examination of the institution.

Effective Facilitation of Subcommittees Strengthens Self-Study Process

Steering Committee members for Iowa Lakes accepted the responsibility to empower employees to find the facts about the institution. Employee groups were told there were no secrets, no hidden agendas, and no pre-written self-study. The College truly wanted a self-evaluation.

Because it is important to ensure that all required GIR's and Criteria are met, the steering committee initially worked within their criteria areas to develop specific questions that the subcommittees would address while researching their respective areas.

After the subcommittee membership was established and members were given their questions, the steering committee criteria chairs met with the group for their first meeting. They explained the process, handed out self-study materials to utilize in their reports, and answered any questions.

At this point, the subcommittees were on their own. They could choose to have the criteria chair attend future meetings, or go their own direction. It was their responsibility to answer the questions and find the pertinent information. A variety of self-study methods were used by the various subcommittees in their self-study examination, including surveys and interviews. The criteria chairs' main responsibility at this point was to encourage and empower the committee members' work. All subcommittees were also given a timeline with completion dates for their self-study work.

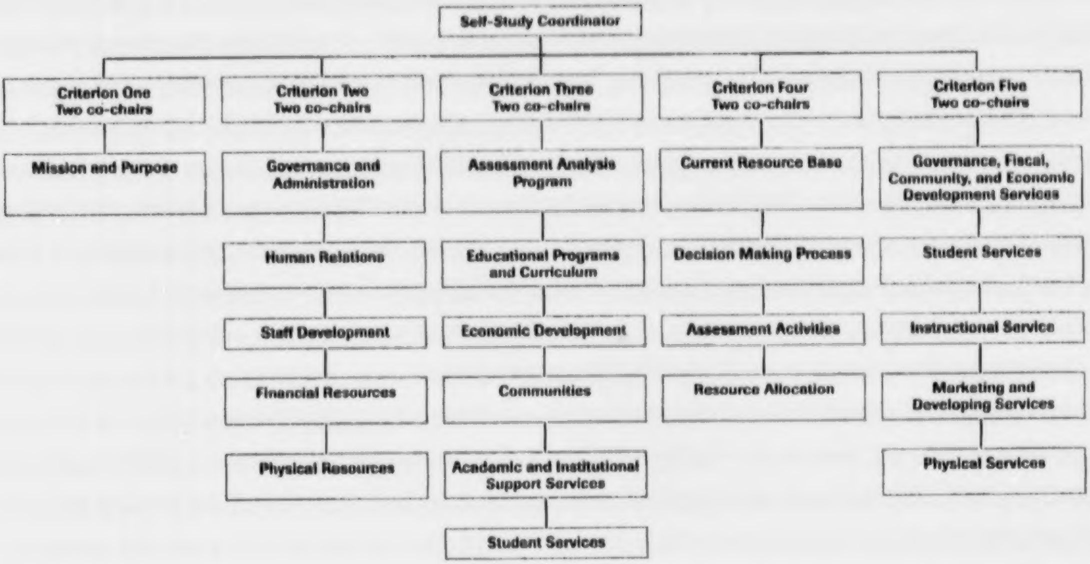
Minutes at all subcommittees were taken and given to the steering committee chairs. These minutes were then filed in the central filing system for the self-study process.

Integrating Committee Work Provides for a Thorough Self-Study

At Iowa Lakes, after the subcommittees finished their information gathering process, they were asked to compile their results for presentation in the self-study. For most committees this involved submitting text with various graphical enhancements. All subcommittees were asked to submit a list of strengths, challenges, and suggestions for improvements.

As with any project that involves more than one worker, there are differences of opinion to deal with, inconsistencies of data gathered, faulty survey instruments, and a variety of presentation and writing styles that must be compiled and unified.

The steering committee chairs integrated the various documents submitted by their subcommittees and compiled the information into a chapter describing the results of the research specific to their criteria.


Self-Study Coordinator
Criterion One
Two co-chairs
Mission and Purpose
Criterion Two
Two co-chairs
Governance and Administration
Human Relations
Staff Development
Financial Resources
Physical Resources
Criterion Three
Two co-chairs
Assessment Analysis Program
Educational Programs and Curriculum
Economic Development
Communities
Academic and Institutional Support Services
Student Services
Criterion Four
Two co-chairs
Current Resource Base
Decision Making Process
Assessment Activities
Resource Allocation
Criterion Five
Two co-chairs
Governance, Fiscal, Community, and Economic Development Services
Student Services
Instructional Service
Marketing and Developing Services
Physical Services

Conclusion

Effective early decisions at Iowa Lakes Community College helped to lay the groundwork for a successful self-study process. The diverse employee makeup of the subcommittees provided a thorough examination of specific topics, which resulted in a comprehensive Self-Study Report and continued accreditation.

Deb Jones is a Professor at Iowa Lakes Community College in Emmetsburg, Iowa.

Nancy Schendel is a Professor at Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Developing Data Resources for Facilitating Institutional Self-Study

Charles F. Harrington
Robert L. Reid
Kevin J. G. Snider

The Role of Data in the Self-Study Process

Driven by technology and increasing expectations, reliable and valid data have moved to center stage in most self-study processes. Consultant-evaluators are increasingly arriving on campuses with great expectations not only of what data are available for their consideration, but also about what institutions have been doing with the information. The result has made effective management of the gathering, dissemination, and reporting of data a crucial factor in any self-study.

This paper relates the experiences of two different self-study preparations in which the management of data was recognized early as a critical component in accomplishing the goals of both institutions. The first, at the University of Southern Indiana, is an excellent example of how information can lead to success in a traditional accreditation visit. The second preparation, at Indiana State University, modeled its data-management system on USI's, but used it to conduct an experimental self-study that linked the NCA visitation to institutional strategic planning. The successful strategies of both these institutions in gathering, reporting, and disseminating data are discussed in the pages that follow.

The experiences of both of these institutions suggest that several different types of data are essential for institutions to fulfill their charge of evaluating institutional compliance with accreditation criteria.

First, institutional data covering everything from enrollment behavior to cost-unit expenditure are vital to a productive self-study. Longitudinal data, typically over eight to ten years, are necessary for an institution to assess its strategic and operational effectiveness. In addition, longitudinal comparative data are useful also in addressing the institution's competitive position within its local, state, regional, and national context. Second, normative and comparative data from state or national sources can provide an excellent resource to self-study committees in search of placing the institution's situation in context. Third, student outcomes assessment data are increasingly essential for meeting accreditation expectations. Finally, survey data generated through commercial or in-house surveys, which can include but are by no means limited to student learning outcomes assessment, can be an essential task for a strong self-study. This last type of data gathering proved to be important to ISU's efforts to link the self-study to the strategic plan.

Setting Up—The Development of a Management Team

Since data and information should be made available early in the self-study process, we suggest that a Self-Study Data Committee be appointed as one of the first steps in your self-study process. In a traditional self-study, this will ensure that self-study subcommittees and the Steering Committee itself have ample time to review, evaluate, and incorporate data into the self-study report drafts. In the experimental self-study, in which committees are asked to conduct both retrospective and prospective examinations of the institution, the Data Committee can help make the process more efficient by being involved in creating the questions guiding the analysis.

Regardless of the type of self-study, the Data Committee should include a small group of people who are familiar with the institution's available resources and who are given the authority, either through rank or through charge, to request data and information from units across campus. Those responsible for institutional research, assessment, and/or the Registrar's office are logical choices.

The Depth and Breadth of Required Data

The collection, analysis, and dissemination of institutional internal and comparative data is a collaborative imperative, encompassing the entire framework of the academic enterprise from academic affairs to facilities maintenance. Data are needed on student enrollment, credit hour production, faculty productivity, student retention and graduation rates, degree production, professional and support staffing position histories, room usage and facilities planning , library and media services resources and utilization trends, as well as on budgetary and financial matters. The sheer magnitude of identifying, collecting, and assembling data into a form useful for self-study can be physically (and emotionally) overwhelming, especially if left to one or more self-study committees. This is where the data committee can make an initial impact. By determining what data are available as well as which of the available data may be recommended to the self-study committees, a lot of the frustration over information can be removed from those doing the examination of a campus.

Generally, longitudinal data, typically over eight to ten years, are necessary sources for documenting an institution's strategic and operational effectiveness and should at least be included initially. In addition, any comparative longitudinal data also may be considered as part of the initial packet. Another way of sorting through which data might be important is to involve the data committee in the process of developing charges for the self-study committees. At both USI and ISU, data packets were provided to the self-study committees at the same time as the charges. The data packs, which were online, contained all of the available information or resources needed to explore the questions asked. In addition, because Data Committee members knew which questions were lacking in data support, plans to gather additional information had been formulated and relayed to the committees early in their examination process.

Utilizing Existing Institutional Data Resources

Much of the data required in the self-study process may already exist in some form at your institution. In addition to the required annual NCA data forms, many institutions prepare routine institutional research reports addressing such areas as student headcount enrollment, credit hour production, faculty teaching load, faculty and staff employment trends, and financial expenditure trends. These sources usually comprise the longitudinal data that are necessary for any self-examination. In addition, Institutional *FactBooks* often convey this information in formats that assist the institution in decision making and provide good supplemental resources for self-studies. A recent trend has seen institutional research, admissions, and registrar offices compiling institutionally specific common data sets (CDS) for survey and questionnaire response purposes. These data sets, whether described as factbooks or by some other title, contain a wealth of data on many varied aspects of institutional operations. Although rare, a variety of circumstances can leave some institutions facing the possibility of having limited longitudinal data available on some topics. In these cases, comparative longitudinal data may not only allow the self-study teams an opportunity to put the institution in context, but can be used to generate the institutional figures in those reports to create longitudinal data. IPEDS, CUPA, and state coordinating boards and data sources for consistent and reliable historical information on most institutions.

Ad hoc and cyclical reports are yet another institutional data source of useful information. Many institutions routinely review academic programs, and professional and technical degree programs are required to undergo specialized accreditation reviews on fixed time schedules, which often provide models for other programs within the institution. Institutional studies on student loan indebtedness, departmental financial analyses, faculty and staff wage and salary differentials, and other related undertakings are additional useful sources of supplemental data. For statewide institutional comparative data, many state higher education systems prepare and publish "state of higher education" data compendia examining such variables as student enrollment patterns, state appropriation per FTE, ratios of full to part-time faculty, semester or credit hour production, retention and degree completion rates, and many other useful comparative measures. These resources are also very useful in longitudinal analysis of institutional trends.

Institutions that participate in national data collection and dissemination initiatives also have virtually unlimited access to institutional peer data. For example, projects such as the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), and University of Maryland Academic Program Cost Study (Middaugh Report) collect and disseminate data on a variety of student cohorts and academic programs.

Institutional data collection for a self-study should support but not supersede existing information. Timely collection and dissemination of data are of major importance and the Self-Study Institutional Data Committee must provide leadership in this regard.

State and National Normative and Comparative Data

Among the new technologies available, most state and national normative and comparative data sets are available on the Internet and are easily accessible and reliable, and provide ready reference for comparative analyses. Institutional and organization websites have been developed that provide a wealth of information and data useful for self-study. New websites continue to emerge and present new perspectives on the use and application of data.

The following list of Internet-based statistical references is not intended to be exhaustive; however, it does represent many of the fine resources available to institutions undertaking self-study. While websites identified below are reputable and dependable, it is worth noting that great care should be taken when using data and information warehoused on the Internet, particularly on issues of the currency, validity, and reliability of the data.

Most of these websites either have or will make their data available at little or no cost to institutions of higher education. Some sites, such as the John Minter and Associates site, are for-profit, proprietary sources that charge fees for access to data. Many of these agencies also make their data available on CD-ROM.

One of the shortcomings of many of these datasets, particularly those of national comparative data, is that the material is often somewhat dated. For example, the most recent faculty data made available through the US Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics *National Study of Postsecondary Education* (NSOPF) are for the 1992-93 academic year. Perhaps the most useful NCES data, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey dataset, are posted two academic years behind.

There are a number of very useful Internet websites to support data collection and analysis for institutional self-study. These serve as links to data on peer institutional comparisons, performance indicators and measures; accrediting agencies; facilities reports; state, federal, and national databases; and other useful data repositories. The following are just a few of the many Internet-based resources available.

- ◇ **Peer comparison and benchmark data**
    - ○ Critical Comparisons of American Colleges and Universities .... http://www.memex-press.com/cc
    - ○ Directory of Higher Education (institutions by Carnegie Classification) .... http://www.educause.edu/asp/dheo/carnegies.asp
    - ○ IPEDS Interactive Database at Arizona State University http://129.219.88.111/ipeds/
    - ○ John Minter Associates–Benchmarks for Higher Education .... http://www.jma-inc.net/
    - ○ Measuring Institutional Performance series (University of Florida) . http://nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu/~ufdata/
    - ○ National Center for Educational Statistics .... http://www.ed.gov/NCES
    - ○ NRC Doctorate Rankings .... http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/researchdoc
    - ○ The NACUBO Benchmarking Project http://138.87.10/web/nacubo/ch3a.html
- ◇ **Performance indicators and standards**
    - ○ Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) .... http://hedsftp.fandm.edu/
    - ○ John Minter Associates–Benchmarks for Higher Education .... http://www.jma-inc.net/
    - ○ National Cooperative DataShare–Benchmark Data Exchange ... http://www.edmin.com/jma/ncds.html
    - ○ Policy Indicators for Higher Education–WICHE .... http://www.wiche.edu/
- ◇ **US Department of Education**
    - ○ Digest of Education Statistics, 1998 .... http://nces.ed.gov/pubs99/digest98/
    - ○ National Postsecondary Education Cooperative http://nces01.ed.gov/NPEC
    - ○ Projections of Education Statistics to 2007 .... http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/pj/

The Condition of Education, 1999	http://nces.ed.gov/pubs99/condition99/
US Department of Education, Topics A to Z	http://www.ed.gov/topicsaz
Digest of Education Statistics, 1998	http://www.ed.gov/topicsaz

- **Accrediting bodies and other useful sites**

North Central Association Commission of Institutions of Higher Education	http://www.ncacihe.org
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education	http://www.wiche.edu/
Southern Regional Education Board	http://www.peach.net/sreb
AAUP Faculty Database	http://tikkun.edu.asu/aaup

Assessment Data

As assessment at the program level becomes an increasingly requested feature in visitations, another important initial task of a Data Committee is to make an inventory of the available student outcomes assessment data. It is likely that departments will differ in the types of outcomes assessment in which they are engaged, in the availability of data they have gathered, and in the quality of that information. Professional schools that routinely have discipline specific accrediting bodies are more likely to have the best models of assessment data. However, an inventory early in the self-study will allow institutions the ability to either acknowledge where they have some room for improvement in student outcomes, or if caught early enough, encourage some progress in that department.

Survey Development—In House

Throughout the self-study process, many campus units will be tempted to create and distribute their own client-user satisfaction surveys. While such efforts to measure campus levels of use and satisfaction with unit programs and services address issues of institutional unit effectiveness, there are dangers to an unorganized approach. These include contradictory data, inadequate sampling, and exhaustion of the respondents. To avoid inundating institutional constituents with numerous self-study surveys, we recommend that institutions develop a single campus-wide programs and services "client-satisfaction" survey. Such an instrument can be relatively broad in scope, addressing issues ranging from campus-wide level of familiarity with the institutional mission, the degree and level of satisfaction with computer services, or the quality of institutional library holdings. One particularly important reason for centralizing an institution-wide satisfaction survey is to stem the temptation to skew the results in favor of the sponsoring institutional unit. Appropriate populations for surveying institutional quality and effectiveness may include full- and part-time faculty, administrative staff, support staff, alumni, community leaders, major employers of your graduates, and the currently enrolled student body.

At the University of Southern Indiana, self-study data staff encountered outstanding success in adapting a well-known national survey to collect faculty-related data. Upon securing permission from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, we administered the *Survey of the Academic Profession*, which focused on how faculty spend their time, how they feel about their students, their jobs, their profession, and the institution. The Foundation also granted the permission to use the data they had collected with the survey in the United States and internationally. The results provided a very clear comparative picture of the professorate and its views of the goals and stresses of institutional life.

At Indiana State University, the data committee designed a survey to fill the informational gaps identified in forming self-study committee charges. The instruments administered to all full-time faculty, professionals/executives, and support staff contained questions pertaining to both the institution's past and its future. In addition, some of the self-study committees asked for various areas to be probed in order to help them in their analyses. The result was similar to that of USI—one survey that satisfied a variety of needs. Although comparative data were not as robust as those experienced by USI, the ISU survey proved tremendously effective in serving the informational needs of the self-study committees.

Institutions need not reinvent the wheel when it comes to collecting data in support of institutional self-study. Most institutions engage in a broad array of data and information collection activities. The insight gained from these experiences should be used to supplement the self-study process. Using primarily the Office of Institutional Research, many institutions conduct ongoing surveys of entering freshmen, continuing students, student attrition, graduates (short- and long-term), retention and attrition characteristics, student needs assessments, employer satisfaction, and student expectation. Data from these various activities are particularly useful for self-study. Many institutions will collect these data on a cyclical basis, thus providing solid baseline data for longitudinal comparison and analysis. Institutions that can document the degree to which they have modified programs and service based on previous assessment position themselves particularly well for their next self-study. At both USI and ISU, the Self-Study Institutional Data Committees were able to review the many reports and surveys already in use, catalog them, and direct other self-study committees to appropriate data sources.

Institutions that engage in programs of ongoing academic program review should have a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data and information with which to supplement the self-study process. Data utilized in the process of accreditation with such associations as American Chemical Society, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, National League for Nursing, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and others can greatly benefit the NCA self-study process. Again, it is important that the Self-Study Institutional Data Committee disseminate information about the content and availability of studies and reports.

Data Dissemination

Once data sources for self-study committees have been identified, the dissemination of institutional data and information becomes important. Easy, unencumbered access to data should be a primary goal. Many institutions now have local area computer networks that provide a wonderful opportunity to disseminate data for self-study purposes. Spreadsheets, databases, and statistical reports can be made widely available by placing them, with unrestricted access, on your institutional computer network. Both USI and ISU established datapacks for each self-study committee. These datapacks, most of which were on line, reduced the committee's time spent searching for data, ensured that everyone was working from the same data sources, and allowed members greater flexibility in exploring the information provided them.

However, frequently self-study committee members will miscode data, misinterpret information, or go outside provided information in their attempts to resolve the issues put before them. While the data committee should by no means restrict the activities of the self-study committee, it should expect to be involved in checking data referenced in the self-study reports and in resolving any discrepancies that may appear. In most cases, the resolution involves clarification or better referencing of sources. In others, it may involve interpretation, which can be a more difficult discrepancy to resolve. However, potential problems can be reduced if it is agreed or stipulated which official data sources are to be considered the final source before the self-study committees engage their work.

Conclusion

The collection, analysis, and dissemination of data in support of an institution's effort to comply with the requirements for the NCA self-study have been expedited by new technologies that help to make the entire process more manageable. The use of Internet-based websites, such as those suggested above, helps ease the burden of this daunting institutional review. These resources can provide statistics and data on institutional profiles, comparative data, performance indicators and standards, as well as a wealth of information on the accreditation process itself. However, these aids will not be fully utilized unless a conscious effort is made to create a data committee with the knowledge and authority to manage the data process involved in a self-study. In addition, this committee is most productive if it is involved early in the process and is made an integral part of the self-study process.

Charles F. Harrington is Director of Institutional Research and Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville.

Robert L. Reid is Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of History, Self-Study Co-Coordinator, at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville.

Kevin J. G. Snider is Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Assessment at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

Worksheets:
A Tool for Multiple Self-Study Tasks

James Clarke
Anne Marie Erickson

Introduction

Itasca Community College developed a worksheet format that served as a simple, yet effective and efficient, tool for conducting the Self-Study for Reaccreditation. The worksheets involved many college constituencies, provided factual information, prompted evaluative statements, listed documents to be cited as numbered exhibits within the body of the Self-Study Report, and enabled the coordinator to build the resource room as work progressed.

Context

Itasca Community College (ICC) is a public, comprehensive, single-campus community college located in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Its student headcount is 1,200 (fall 1999). The college is one of 36 member institutions of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

ICC was founded in 1922 as an autonomous college, but in 1981 it became part of a regional system called the Arrowhead Community Colleges. In 1995, the creation of the statewide MnSCU system prompted a review of the Arrowhead governance structure. In 1996, the MnSCU Board of Trustees decided to dissolve the Arrowhead College Region, making ICC an autonomous college once again.

ICC was first accredited by NCA in 1975; subsequent reaccreditations occurred in1980, 1983, and 1988, the latter two the result of accreditation granted to the Arrowhead Community Colleges.

In the spring of 1997, the college held a series of strategic planning sessions. Immediately following the planning sessions, preparations for conducting the self-study began. Administrators invited the ICC Faculty Association to recommend someone to serve as the self-study coordinator. The Association's recommendation was approved by the president, who then established a Self-Study Steering Committee in preparation for the April 1999 team visit.

The size of the Steering Committee (12 members) allowed for representation from all of the functional areas of the college, yet was not so large as to be unwieldy. The Steering Committee included career and transfer faculty members, support staff, directors, college administrators, and a regional director of Institutional Research. Persons selected to serve knew particular areas of the college well, but also had a broad view of ICC.

Steering Committee members chaired or co-chaired each of seven subcommittees. Five of the subcommittees were based on functional areas of the college: Human Resources and Staff Development, Instructional Resources, Institutional Resources, Financial Resources and Physical Plant, and Student Services. The remaining two subcommittees dealt with academic assessment and the integrity criterion.

Although the committee structure permitted wide involvement in the self-study process, representation from the faculty was not as broad as the Steering Committee would have liked. ICC has only 41 full-time faculty members, and while the self-study was being conducted the faculty was also involved in semester conversion and a review of its degree programs.

To encourage input outside of the self-study committee structure, the coordinator published a regular newsletter and held several campus-wide open forums. In addition, the president stressed the importance of the self-study process in several memos to all faculty and staff. He relayed progress updates and invited input and questions at campus duty days, in focus groups, at General Advisory Committee meetings, through his weekly newsletter articles, and during regular President's Information Sessions.

A Tool for the Task: Meeting the Purposes of Self-Study

The college sought to conduct an accurate, analytical study of the institution that would serve the following purposes:

- to stimulate review and evaluation of policies, practices, procedures, and records;
- to encourage an open, honest dialogue about the college's strengths, concerns, opportunities, and challenges;
- to conduct a comprehensive, reliable evaluation of the functional units of the college as a solid foundation for institutional planning and improvement;
- to provide meaningful information that can guide the college as it regularly reviews and carries out its mission; and
- to foster an environment of accountability in which assessment of student academic achievement and institutional effectiveness can develop and flourish.

In order to conduct a thorough self-study, the coordinator would need to rely on the subcommittees for essential factual information. Most important, however, was the evaluative information she wanted the subcommittees to provide. Assigning these tasks to the subcommittees would ensure a participative process involving many college constituencies and would result in a balanced presentation.

Various speakers at the 1997 NCA Pre-Conference Workshop made it clear that the following questions needed to be addressed in the self-study process:

- **What are the basic facts?** The subcommittees needed to describe the area under discussion, outlining the background concisely. They should weigh the information carefully and decide what was most important for purposes of the self-study.
- **So what?** Given the facts, what conclusions could the subcommittees reach as to the college's strengths and concerns?
- **Can you prove it?** The subcommittees needed to support all of their conclusions, citing available evidence.
- **What's next?** Based on a discussion of the strengths and concerns in the area under study, the subcommittees should provide recommendations.

A Tool for the Task: Prompting an Evaluative Process

The self-study coordinator and Dean of Instruction grappled with the question of how to guide subcommittee members through this evaluative process. Their answer: A worksheet. As educators, they recognized the value the worksheet has as a tool for directed study. When worksheets are well structured, they can elicit responses that tie to learning/critical thinking goals. Therefore, the ICC self-study worksheets would incorporate the questions listed previously in order to prompt evaluative responses.

The coordinator walked the Steering Committee members (who chaired the subcommittees) through the worksheet, explaining what was required to address *The Facts, So What? Prove it,* and *What's next?* questions. Then the Instructional Resources subcommittee used the worksheet to research one area of study. The co-chairs brought copies of the completed worksheet to the Steering Committee, where the process and format were discussed and refined.

The self-study coordinator attended the initial meeting of each subcommittee. She described the worksheet process and answered members' questions. The worksheets were accompanied by a compilation of existing surveys and other data sources; relevant samples, photocopied from an evaluative self-study report; excerpts from the 1987 Self-Study Report to aid them in reviewing significant changes over the past decade; and a one-page set of guidelines to follow in completing the worksheets. In addition, a guidesheet tied the NCA's Criteria and Patterns of Evidence to the subcommittee's area of study–which helped members determine what they should focus on in order to best address the self-study's purposes.

The subcommittee members volunteered to delve into selected areas of study. They were encouraged to use the worksheets in any manner that would facilitate their task. Some re-ordered the questions to suit their own working processes; some provided computer-generated responses and others were handwritten; some wrote in complete sentences, while others submitted notes.

Using the worksheets as a guide, the subcommittees ultimately provided much of the information contained in the Self-Study Report. In addition, they gathered many of the exhibits for the resource room, listing documents by title and attaching them to the worksheets.

The subcommittees also conducted interviews, held focus group meetings, and devised and conducted surveys when they were deemed necessary. For example, the Institutional Resources subcommittee asked the faculty to respond to a half-page questionnaire about the library collection. The Instructional Resources subcommittee garnered student opinions about topics such as class availability with a one-page questionnaire. It was distributed during spring registration by committee members. In addition, Steering Committee members worked with the ICC Marketing Committee to develop a new survey instrument in order to obtain information from the area business community.

Listing strengths, concerns, and recommendations together in a two-page worksheet seemed to focus subcommittee members' deliberations, and generally prompted evaluative information. An example from the Student Services subcommittee worksheet on records and admissions is shown below:

- **Specific concern:** The physical layout of the Records and Admissions Office does not offer an area for confidential discussions with students, or provide smooth traffic flow for registration.
- **Supporting evidence:** Staff desks are located in an open area accessible to all staff as a walkway. Both office doors and counter locations create barriers to physical accessibility, confidential conversations, and smooth traffic flow.
- **Recommendation:** This concern has been directed to the Facilities subcommittee for examination and recommendation.

As a result of the subcommittee recommendations, this concern has been incorporated into a College Center remodeling plan, which is part of the Facilities Plan for FY 2004-2005.

After subcommittee members completed a worksheet, it was forwarded to the Steering Committee for review at its weekly meetings. The Steering Committee discussed each of the worksheets, correcting or augmenting them when necessary. These reviews became a valuable part of the self-study process, as members updated information, asked probing questions, and engaged in discussions that were, at times, quite passionate.

A Tool for the Task: Writing and Documentation

The coordinator then filed the worksheet and attachments under the appropriate Criterion and referred to it while writing the Self-Study Report. Each chapter opened with a listing of the college's main strengths and concerns relative to the criterion under discussion, as identified by the subcommittees and Steering Committee. Only the most germane information from the worksheets was incorporated into the Report. The coordinator and Steering Committee determined which information to include in each chapter based on the following three main criteria:

- Does the information provided address the Criterion and Patterns of Evidence?
- Is the material of particular relevance to the college's current goals and objectives?
- Is the area under discussion either a particular strength or of particular concern to ICC at this time?

However, all of the worksheets were placed in the Resource Room in order to demonstrate the thoroughness with which the college community conducted its self-study.

Although ICC's coordinator also wrote the Self-Study Report, worksheets would also work well if subcommittees were assigned to write sections of the report. Steering Committee review of the worksheets would continue to be essential to a thorough process.

A Tool for the Task: Building the Resource Room

After reviewing samples of other self-study reports, the coordinator decided to cite exhibits within the body of the Self-Study Report. This would provide thorough documentation, and would also mean that the resource room could be built as work progressed. The Steering Committee had to choose which of two approaches they preferred in setting up the exhibit numbering system: The exhibits could be tied to the chapters in which they were initially cited, or by category, such as governance-related documents or financial information. The committee elected to use the latter system, which they felt would result in a more rational ordering of materials in the resource room.

Once the documents had been used in the writing of the self-study report, they were tagged with an exhibit number and were ready for filing in the resource room. The coordinator reserved the facility designated as the resource room one week in advance of the evaluation team's visit. All documents were arranged in clearly labeled, portable hanging file bins for ease of use. Every document contained within a file was labeled with the exhibit number so that anyone using the resource room could easily refile a document in its proper place.

In the weeks prior to the NCA Team visit, the Steering Committee identified contact persons for each exhibit. If a team member needed further information or had any questions, a detailed resource room index would direct him or her to the appropriate source.

A Tool for the Task: Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning

The worksheets continue to be useful: The Institutional Effectiveness director has copies of all worksheets on file. They serve as a valuable tool in the Institutional Effectiveness process, which seeks to address many of the same questions. The work of the subcommittees also feeds directly into strategic planning. The concerns and recommendations that emerged from the subcommittees' self-study process assist the college community in shaping its annual strategic objectives.

Conclusion

The worksheet format is most likely to be successful if the Steering Committee and subcommittee members are highly motivated and committed to the self-study process. However, the fact that the subcommittees were given very specific assigned tasks and an explicit deadline appealed to some faculty and staff members, who contrasted the process with the ongoing (and seemingly never ending) discussions in other college committees.

The worksheets addressed multiple needs, generated a thorough review of the areas under study, and provided a structure that resulted in an efficient, effective self-study process. The ICC Self-Study worksheets became the principle vehicle for:

- obtaining factual information;
- prompting evaluative statements;
- developing a list of documents to be cited as numbered exhibits within the body of the Self-Study Report;
- building the resource room materials as the work progressed; and
- quickly identifying and filling any gaps in documentation.

Acknowledgements

The Steering Committee members at Itasca Community College were as follows: Nancy Alfuth, Jon Byrne, Jim Clarke, Anne Marie Erickson, Mike Johnson, Calvin Lidmark, Gwen Litchke, Bill Maki, Doug Olney, Candace Perry, Joe Sertich, and Sally Velzen. They, along with the many subcommittee members, demonstrated the motivation and commitment essential to ICC's self-study process.

James Clarke is Dean of Instruction at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Anne Marie Erickson is English Instructor at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

The Resource Room: Real, Virtual, and Imagined

Elaine M. Klein

The promise of online technologies to enhance communication and provide efficient access to institutional resources allows us to imagine that, at some point in the future, accreditation reviews will eventually become a hybrid of "real" and "virtual" site visits. While some such visits have already taken place, the extent to which electronic technologies have already penetrated the self-study process suggest that the "virtual visit" is well on its way for all institutions. We take for granted the word-processors and publishing tools that allow us to draft, revise, and publish our Self-Study Reports; we communicate with study participants and the evaluation team via e-mail and listserv; we use electronic bulletin boards, conferencing tools, and calendar software; and we seek out policy updates, search for answers to frequently asked questions, download forms, and even register for the Annual Meeting on the NCA's website.

In the reaccreditation process at UW-Madison, the World Wide Web supplemented traditional communication methods, allowing us to post timely explanations and updates about the process. Relevant links to additional resources enabled stakeholders to inform themselves about our work to the extent they desired. Referring to the website, whether in person, electronically, or in print, meant that our audiences always had access to more information. Participants had twenty-four hour access to minutes of meetings, points under discussion, e-mail lists, and links of resources. A page of "virtual" news clippings coupled with participant names and e-mail addresses further extended the depth and breadth of our reach. And, eventually, drafts were available for review by anyone with an interest in the project, be they students, faculty, staff, alumni, or legislators–many more people than would have been reached through a traditional distribution list.

As the self-study process neared completion and preparations for the team visit began, we found we could also make effective and efficient use of current resources by indexing institutional materials that were already available online. At the time, our goal was simple: we needed to manage the large amount of detailed information that is collected almost as a matter of course at a large public Research I university. We did not anticipate that achieving this goal would lead to two key outcomes: first, that the "virtual resource room" would allow team members to prepare for the team visit well in advance (thereby increasing their ability to work efficiently while also enhancing the overall quality of their visit); and second, that the "virtual consolidation" of these materials would represent a resource that will serve us for years to come.

The Virtual Resource Room

The development of the Virtual Resource Room preceded that of the real resource room. As with the latter, organization was the most important factor; however, other points also came into play:

- ◇ **Permission.** Consultation with our NCA staff liaison and team chair assured us that this was an acceptable way to supplement our "real" resource room. The "virtual resource room" would provide direct links to materials available online, while the "real resource room" would house hard copies of materials that were unavailable electronically.
- ◇ **Organization.** After consulting members of our campus community who have participated in the evaluation process as NCA Consultant-Evaluators (C-Es), we organized our work according to that audience's expectations. Since the NCA asks every institution to provide a core set of documents with which we could expect our audience to be familiar, these were indexed to reflect the NCA's checklist (NCA Handbook of Accreditation, p. 143). (A second set of documents, specific to our special emphasis study, was indexed separately.) As with the documents found in any resource room, the high quality, accuracy, and accessibility of these materials was crucial.

- **Design.** Given the wide variety of materials in the index, the anticipated "technological comfort level" of our C-E audience, and the likelihood that they would access the site from a distance, a relatively simple, quick-loading site would be most effective.
- **Technical details.** With any website, support and maintenance are important concerns.
- **Timeline.** Work on the website began four months before the site visit. Design and content were substantially complete six weeks later, with additions, updates and corrections continuing until the day before the visit. This allowed us to inform the team chair of the site's existence when the Self-Study Report was distributed. The team had time to consult the site, prepare draft materials, and consider the most productive areas of inquiry; as a result, they were very well prepared when they arrived.

The Real Resource Room

As we developed the "Virtual Resource Room," we also gathered documents and materials for the real resource room. The documents were restricted to those that were unavailable, or available only with great inconvenience, online. In some cases, we chose to provide hard copies in addition to online materials, anticipating that our guests would approach glossy admissions brochures, hefty financial audits, and thorough assessment reports differently than lists of hypertext links.

The "Virtual Resource Room" played an important role in the development of the real resource room: files were indexed in a manner consistent with the online references, computers were provided with web browsers with the online index set as the "home page," and staff was trained to work with the web-based system. But the virtual resource room could not replace the need for real resources: computer workstations, telephones, fax and copy machines, typewriter, legal pads, and pens were all provided. Good hospitality helped us balance the distancing effect of technology and "put a face" on the virtual institution to make our guests feel comfortable: students escorted team members to meetings around campus, snacks and beverages were available, meetings were scheduled to include "down-time" for each member of the team. By no means were we able to provide a completely "online" resource room experience; by no means did we want to.

The Imagined Resource Room

What could have been done differently?

- Had we developed the website knowing that, eventually, we would develop a "Virtual Resource Room," the work could have been distributed throughout the study process. This may have also allowed some offices to use this event as an opportunity to develop, expand, or enhance their online offerings.
- Website accessibility is a growing concern on campus; the site we developed is not sufficiently accessible by current standards.
- Since the visit, the Virtual Resource Room has become a tool that has helped us explain the accreditation process, goals, and methods: the materials posted on the site demonstrate the indicators by which we are assessed and our institutional health is measured. This can only enhance our credibility as a public institution.
- As accreditation continues to evolve into a process that calls upon the strengths of strategic planning and benchmarking techniques, it may be that, eventually, ongoing review of continuously updated documents housed in a Virtual Resource Room will become the means by which formal evaluation of an institution's health is assessed, reserving the self-study and team visit processes for the more creative, analytical work of planning and consultation.

Conclusion

Clearly, the ease of gathering online materials depends on the extent to which the institution already makes them available, combining technical capacity (from infrastructure to staff support) with public disclosure requirements. As a large public institution, many of documents were already online. If not, requests to make them available were not opposed and some were even met with increased efforts to post documents online. We did encounter difficulties: the quality and accuracy of materials varied across campus, with many documents available but out of date, inaccurate, or difficult to navigate. The "Virtual Resource Room" therefore reflects the strengths and limitations of offices across campus. In light of this double-edged sword, decisions on whether it can be done well or not at all need to be made early in the process, as is the case with decisions on whether it will produce or save labor and whether the effort invested will reap future benefits.

Elaine M. Klein is Executive Assistant to the Chair, New Directions: The Reaccreditation Project, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Organizing a Professional-Looking Resource Room

Ann Peterson
Gale Bigbee

This session will cover practical advice for those colleges/universities that will have an upcoming team visit from North Central Association. Those colleges/universities with an upcoming team visit may want to hear first-hand what South Central Technical College did (and what the team evaluators suggested we include) to make the evaluators' visit easy to access information.

South Central Technical College had its team visit on November 1-3, 1999. The evaluation team commented on our Resource Room and how we worked to get the necessary information they needed to evaluate our technical college. Specific topics covered during the presentation are described in this paper.

Display Professionalism

Prior to setting up the material into professional-looking binders, the supporting material needs to be gathered while you are working on your self-study and stored in a safe place. It helps to develop a database of this material with the following headings:

- Document name
- Responsible person (who can help you get this material)
- Date requested [from the Resource Room Coordinator(s)]
- Date received
- Need to be bound???
- In Resource Room

A database like this will give the resource room coordinators a better sense of what documents are already obtained and what needs to be found or tracked to be included in the room. This database was sorted as an alphabetized cross-reference table to assist in finding material for the evaluators.

Your resource room will have supporting material for your self-study displayed in binders. Consistent labeling of these binders with preprinted inserts gives a professional look and "Corporate Identity" for your university/college. These preprinted inserts should be similar to, if not identical to, the cover or divider pages of your self-study.

Some of your supporting documentation such as your course catalog, strategic plan, and/or assessment plan may already be their own bound publications. These published pieces don't necessarily need to be enclosed in special binders; you can neatly arrange these pieces on a table or counter area.

Room Layout

It is necessary to provide different work areas for the evaluation team. Some work areas within your Resource Room may include:

- conference table
- work area
- computer area
- snack area
- area for coats and personal belongings

Necessary Equipment and Supplies

Your evaluation team members are going to need supplies and equipment to complete their task. Our five evaluators were all provided laptop computers with Microsoft Office, Internet access, and printing capabilities. Our Resource Room also had a computer connected to the Internet with our home page active at all times.

You want to make sure the room is comfortable. Set an environment that is easy to work in and reduce the stress level for the team. Some ideas to add a more welcoming touch may include:

- plants
- fresh cold water
- hot coffee and water for tea
- food–fruits, rolls, bagels, cream cheese
- Kleenex®
- office supplies
- phone and phone numbers
- fax machine
- paper shredder
- printer
- photocopier

A cozy environment in the Resource Room will set the mood for the entire evaluation visit.

Key People to Coordinate the Team Visit—Roles and Responsibilities

- **President's Administrative Assistant**–booked rooms for meetings on campus, coordinated evaluation team's agenda, which included scheduling individual and group sessions; ordered all food requests for evaluator sessions; coordinated transportation to and from airport and while evaluators were on site.
- **Campus NCA Coordinator(s)**–picked up evaluators from the airport, set up hotel accommodations, assisted with coordinating evaluators' schedules, was available during the visit to help locate information for evaluators.
- **Resource Room Coordinator(s)**–organized supporting material, supplies, and equipment for Resource Room; was available during the visit to help locate information for evaluators.
- **Research, Planning and Assessment Office Staff**–organized supporting material, supplies, and equipment for the Resource Room; assisted with administrative support while evaluators were on site.

SCTC has two campuses in different communities–Faribault and North Mankato. Both campuses had Resource Rooms but the main Resource Room was at the larger campus (North Mankato). The Resource Room at the smaller facility (Faribault) contained information specific to that campus, such as the syllabi of the coursework on that campus and department assessment plans.

Each campus had a faculty member with a portion of his/her load allocated to NCA coordination for 18 months. The faculty member from the Faribault campus was responsible for setting up the Resource Room. On the North Mankato campus, two faculty members, the Office of Research, Planning and Assessment, and the General Education Division Chairperson organized the Resource Room.

The Dean of Research, Planning and Assessment and her office staff were instrumental in completing the report, assisting with the necessary supporting documentation, and completing necessary surveys and reports that supplemented the NCA Self-Study Report.

All of these people were familiar with the self-study, kept track of the supporting reference material while reading the self-study, and knew how information was grouped together once it was bound. While the team was on site, there was at least one person available at all times to assist in locating material for the evaluators. Customer service is an integral part of working with the evaluators!

Ann Peterson is an Instructor at South Central Technical College in North Mankato, Minnesota.

Gale Bigbee is an Instructor at South Central Technical College in North Mankato, Minnesota.

Connecting the NCA Team to Distant Students Through Technology

Jo Ann Sterling

Introduction

- ◇ **Rationale.** An important component of the campus visit is the NCA Team's interaction with students, and it is customary to schedule opportunities for team members to meet with current and former students. Such interaction, however, becomes more difficult when delivery of instruction includes traditional classrooms at distant sites as well as innovative methods such as interactive video, audio, and Internet technologies. In order for the review to reflect operations of the entire institution, the distant students must be able to participate in the NCA visit, without incurring the expense of having team members travel to distant sites.
- ◇ **Institutional profile and distance education opportunities.** The University of St. Francis is a Catholic Franciscan institution offering 29 undergraduate and six graduate programs. As a private, comprehensive, coeducational institution, the university serves approximately 1,300 students at its main campuses in Joliet, Illinois, and more than 3,000 students at more than 100 sites located in 18 states. In addition to traditional degree delivery, the university offers distance education credit and degrees through video and computer technologies. Approximately 500 students are enrolled in 35 online courses for the spring 2000 semester.
- ◇ **Visit focus.** The University of St. Francis began the self-study process in August of 1997 in preparation for the evaluation visit September 27-29, 1999. A special focus of the visit was the institution's request for approval to offer its degree programs by distance delivery technology, beginning with the Master of Business Administration and the Bachelor of Science in Health Arts. In view of this request, the team was especially interested in communicating with students enrolled in online courses.

Options Considered for Connecting

A task force was assembled to identify the possible methods of connecting the NCA team with distant students. Members of the task force included the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the Director of the Center for Instructional Delivery, and representatives from the two colleges that enroll the majority of distant students (Graduate Studies and Health Arts). Three feasible options generated by the task force included:

- ◇ **Interactive video conference.** The Team Chair would be given a list of ten sites from which to select five sites to visit via video conference. If the facility in which the class met did not have interactive video capability, the university would arrange for the class to meet at a local video conference center.
- ◇ **Chatroom.** The university would set up an online chatroom and arrange for students to engage in an online exchange with the team.
- ◇ **Online bulletin board.** The university would create an online bulletin board that would allow distant students to access the university website and respond to selected discussion questions. The team would access the student responses during the visit.

The online bulletin board option was selected for the following reasons:

1. **Every** distant student would be able to participate, rather than the limited number in the five classes selected for the video conference or the restricted number able to participate in the chatroom format.

2. The bulletin board would not require using valuable class time for a team visit.
3. The team would be able to access responses at times convenient for them rather than having to be present at a specified time for a video conference or chatroom.
4. Creating a bulletin board would be less complicated and less expensive than arranging video conferences.
5. Participation in the bulletin board could be extended to online students as well as to students at distant sites.

Procedures *Prior* to the Visit

◇ **Solicit questions.** The Self-Study Coordinator explained (via e-mail) the bulletin board concept to the NCA team members and requested that they submit to the university any questions they wished to ask the distant students. Questions would reflect the team members' tasks as NCA evaluators. The nine questions selected were:

1. How much contact do you have with the faculty member teaching the course, and what type of contact is it?
2. Given that there are many institutions offering the same programs, why did you elect to take a course from the University of St. Francis as a distance education course?
3. How does your contact with other students differ from contact with students in traditional courses?
4. In your coursework via distance education, what proportion of your classes have been taught by full-time faculty members from the main campus? Have you experienced any significant differences either in the way these courses were presented or in response time of the professors?
5. What efforts have been made (on your part and on the university's part) to make you a part of the larger university community?
6. How often do you avail yourself of the opportunity to participate in discussions, and does this interaction make a difference in your learning?
7. What library resources do you make use of; for what types of work; with what frequency?
8. From your perspective as a student, what are the major differences between courses taken via distance learning versus those taken in a campus/classroom setting?
9. Why are you enrolled in distance education courses?

◇ **Create the bulletin board.** The bulletin board was created by Gerard Kickul, the Director of the university's Center for Instructional Delivery. He chose as the software package WebCT because it had a lower server overhead than other programs, allowed students to create their own accounts, had a password system that prevented general public comments, and seemed to have simple, user friendly interface. Students were given access to the bulletin board feature only.

The options available on the NCA visit website included:

○ Create an account (how to create a user account)

○ Enter the NCA visit website (if already a user, enter directly into the NCA visit website)

○ USF On-line Help (if having problems, assistance is available)

○ How to Use Our Discussion Site (using a bulletin board is easy with simple instructions)

○ All About Our NCA Visit (general information on NCA, purpose of self-study, summary of criteria, and self-study recommendations)

Upon accessing the NCA visit website, the student's hardware/software were tested and if they were incompatible, the student was directed to an alternate website that utilized e-mail for responding to the questions. The alternate site provided information for submitting comments, updating browsers, and receiving assistance from the Center for Instructional Delivery. It also gave the students details of the NCA visit. Comments received via e-mail were posted on the bulletin board by university personnel.

◇ **Inform and instruct students.** Letters were sent to 3,000 distant students inviting them to participate in the NCA evaluation process. The bulletin board format was explained and instructions provided for accessing the questions. A letter was sent to all faculty to inform them that students had been invited to participate in the evaluation process.

Implementation *During* the Visit

- **Computers and programs.** In preparation for the team to access the bulletin board, the staff of the Information Services Department equipped the Team Resource Room with computers and established accounts and passwords for each team member. Throughout the three-day visit, personnel were available to assist the team with technological tasks.
- **Training and demonstrations.** During the Monday morning orientation for the team, the university provided a 20-minute training session on how the overall network operates, how to access the bulletin board, and how to access Learning Space in order to observe an online course. Written instructions were also provided.
- **Participation by students.** The questions were posted on the bulletin board September 22, 1999, and students were able to respond from that date through September 29, the last day of the visit. Out of a total of 120 students who created accounts and viewed material, 29 students entered 159 responses to the nine questions using the bulletin board. Not every participating student chose to answer all of the questions. Ten students submitted a total of 54 responses via the alternate e-mail access.
- **Assessment of the process.** The NCA team expressed a high level of satisfaction with the online bulletin board. They were pleased with the ease of operation, the inclusion of all distant students in the invitation to participate, and the convenience of being able to read the responses at any point during the visit. The team believed that it had heard from more students than if they had actually visited classes or met with a group of students.

Realizations *After* the Visit

- **Additional demographics.** The university determined that should the bulletin board be utilized again, additional information should be requested from students. It would be helpful to know the type of distant education in which the student is enrolled and the level of the degree program (graduate or undergraduate).
- **Construction of questions.** The wording of the nine posted questions may have been somewhat confusing and not appropriate for every method of instructional delivery. Future bulletin board questions should be customized to correspond to the specific delivery mode.
- **Utilization of data.** The self-study and visit follow up should include tabulation of the bulletin board responses and subsequent modification to programs and services based on comments from students.
- **Further potential for bulletin board.** The university should consider whether the bulletin board approach could be utilized as part of the regular course evaluation process. There would have to be a way, however, to assure student anonymity.

Conclusion

One question that continues to be asked is whether the amount of work involved in creating and implementing the online bulletin board was really worth the effort. The answer is a resounding **"YES."**

The university believes that the demonstration of technological capability and the quantity and quality of positive responses from distant students convinced the NCA team that the university's request to offer degrees online should be approved. The request might not have been granted had the team not been connected to the distant students via the bulletin board.

As institutions increase distance education opportunities, they also need to continue to explore and refine the means by which NCA teams are able to interact with students who are not physically present on campus.

Jo Ann Sterling is Professor of Education at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

Countdown:
"On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!"

Beth J. Bridgforth
Jan Haven

Introduction

Planning is the key to a successful self-study. Conducting a self-study is about time: managing time effectively and efficiently. Although the team visit to East Arkansas Community College (EACC) was not scheduled until March 1999, preliminary planning began with the appointment of co-coordinators and the development of a detailed plan in May 1996 that provided the blueprint upon which the self-study process would be built. The Steering Committee was established in September 1996, and six task committees were subsequently formed. The organization and direction for the study's entire process centered upon the basic premise that its ultimate success would depend on involvement by all affected constituencies. Hence, of paramount significance were the participation and the contributions of every institutional employee who served on one of the respective task committees. The college community spent months, in fact, years, organizing and preparing for the accreditation visit, and suddenly, it's only a year away from the team visit. Now what? The countdown has begun–"On your mark, get set, go!" What can be done to motivate, encourage, provide direction and guidance, and achieve closure during the final months and days of the process?

On Your Mark: Revving Up! *(12 months before the team visit)*

☐ **Informing the College Community**

- ◊ **NCA forums.** To promote awareness, to evoke enthusiasm and interest, and to actively involve all employees in the self-study process, four NCA Forums were held for the faculty and staff. Some were fun but informational, and some covered the "brass tacks."
  - ○ EACC's North Central liaison, Dr. John Taylor, was the featured speaker at a campus-wide forum. Dr. Taylor discussed "NCA's Role in the Self-Study Process" and conferred with various constituencies to answer questions and offer his expertise.
  - ○ In an effort to "spice up" the otherwise mundane task of learning the Criteria and General Institutional Requirements, the faculty and staff engaged in a game of "Family Feud."
  - ○ Dr. Robert Fisher, a motivational speaker and author *The Dream Team,* elaborated on the importance of "teamwork" in the self-study process.
  - ○ An NCA consultant-evaluator addressed the college community and offered guidance and advice for writing the Self-Study Report. Breakout sessions with various groups were held to answer questions and offer suggestions.
  - ○ "Misery loves company!" An experienced Self-Study Coordinator from a sister two-year college that had recently completed a successful self-study helped to alleviate fears and apprehension with a discussion topic of "What to Expect from a NCA Team Visit."
- ◊ **NCA newsletters ("Accreditation Angles").** Four newsletters, "Accreditation Angles" were published and disseminated on campus to inform the college community. Each edition of the newsletter focused on some aspect of the self-study process–explanations of roles and responsibilities, history of previous Self-Study

Reports, overview of the assessment of student learning at EACC, new and innovative programs at EACC, familiarization with the ongoing strategic planning process, biographical sketches of team members, and an agenda of upcoming self-study events.

☐ Motivating the College Community

- ◇ **"Talk it up!" Publicize, publicize, publicize.** In addition to newsletters and forums, frequent use was made of campus e-mail to keep employees informed of the ongoing activities and progress of the self-study. North Central manuals and other documents were placed on reserve in a specified location for referral. When the final draft of the Self-Study Report was completed, several draft copies were placed in the library and in all office buildings on campus. Employees were encouraged to peruse the draft copies and provide input. It was both surprising and gratifying to have all the suggestions elicited from this request. Remember to keep part-time faculty in the information loop.

- ◇ **Student awareness and involvement.** To ensure student awareness and understanding of the self-study process, campus newsletters highlighted North Central activities and the impending team visit. Framed mission statements were placed in each classroom building and mouse pads with the mission statement were put in the Computer Center. Honor students and Student Government (SGA) officers served as ambassadors of the college during the time that team members were on campus.

- ◇ **Food as a self-study aphrodisiac.** Food tends to whet the appetite and motivate cooperative spirit and camaraderie. Each month a joint meeting of the Steering Committee and task committees was held, and "sugary sweets" gave the energy boost to get to work. At each monthly faculty/staff meeting, the co-coordinators passed out candy bars with motivational slogans attached, such as "It's crunch time" (Nestle's Crunch); "It's PayDay: All your hard work will pay off" (PayDay); "Kudos--EACC Family" (Kudo Health Bar).

- ◇ **Marketing the mission statement.** Framed mission statements were placed in each classroom building and office building on campus. Every faculty and staff member received a mouse pad and business cards with the EACC mission statement on them.

Getting Set *(Three-four months before the team visit)*

- ◇ **Planning the North Central Resource Room.** As with every aspect of the self-study process, this will take more time than you expect!
  - ○ Reserve the room that will be used as the North Central Resource Room during the team visit. Inspect the room for proper electrical outlets, adequate lighting, etc. Plan for maintenance tasks, such as cleaning carpets, painting, and other "fix it" jobs.
  - ○ Brainstorm to plan the organization of the Resource Room.
  - ○ Order supplies for the Resource Room--binder notebooks for gathered data, multicolored file folders, desktop file racks, magazine racks, bookends, nametags, and acrylic sign-holders. Also, order memorabilia with the college logo, such as mugs, notepads, pens, pencils, and notebooks to place on team members' individual workstations.
  - ○ Send out "Request Form for North Central Resource Room" to appropriate personnel. Begin assembling and cataloging documents and necessary materials at this time.

- ◇ **Communication with Team Members.** Mail copies of the completed Self-Study Report to team members! Bi-monthly letters and information packets were mailed to team members. These packets included college catalogs, campus newsletters, student literary magazines, viewbooks, organizational chart, local and regional maps, information about the area and the college. Have copies of these documents available in the Resource Room so that team members don't have to bring the materials with them--and make sure they know this before they leave home.

- ◇ **Down to "Brass Tacks"**
  - ○ Make hotel accommodations and transportation arrangements for team members. If appropriate, make plans to personally meet each team member at the airport.

- ○ Plan and make reservations for meals and meetings for team members. The President meets with the team chair at the beginning of each day.
- ○ Order invitations and compile a mailing list of invitees to functions and meetings with team members.
- ○ Make name tags for team members, Board of Trustees, and College employees to be worn when the team is on campus. Also, name tags should be prepared for community leaders and students who will be meeting with team members at social and business functions.

Go! *(One week before the team visit)*

- ◇ Inspect hotel accommodations and make sure that rooms are attractive and properly equipped. Place amenities in each room, such as computers, printers, pens and pencils, notepads, as well as refreshments. Also, provide a welcome basket, a telephone list of those to contact for various questions and needs, and an agenda of upcoming events in each room.
- ◇ Mail invitations to those who will be meeting with team members. An opening dinner was held for members of the Board of Trustees and college administrators. The EACC choir performed that evening. Approximately thirty community leaders were invited to an informal breakfast to meet and socialize with team members. Meetings for faculty and staff members and student groups were organized to meet with team members in a non-threatening, informal social environment.
- ◇ Hold a faculty/staff "kick off" meeting to prepare the college community for the upcoming team visit. Praise, praise, praise the hard work and team efforts of college employees. Discuss anticipated questions that the NCA team might ask to reduce general apprehension prior to the visit.
- ◇ Make sure all facilities are "spic n span" and that the grounds are immaculate for the team's arrival.
- ◇ Make "welcome" signs and banners to place around campus.
- ◇ Set up the North Central Resource Room
  - ○ Attractively arrange tables for the display of data–binders, file racks, and magazine racks for each table. Make the room colorful!
  - ○ Provide individual work desks and computers for each team member with EACC mouse pads; notebooks; and baskets filled with office supplies, such as staplers, paper clips, highlighters, pens, and pencils. Make sure printers and fax machines are easily accessible.
  - ○ Set up a refreshment table (coffee, juice, pastries, snack mix, and sodas) with an attractive centerpiece and napkins with school emblem.
  - ○ Set up a scrapbook display and tri-fold display of photographs of EACC college community and events.
  - ○ Organize an index for the Resource Room to facilitate location of information and documents.
  - ○ Place a telephone and a campus telephone list in the Resource Room.
  - ○ Make provisions for sack lunches on the days that a "working lunch" is needed.
  - ○ Ask the President who should be invited to attend the Exit Session. Reserve a room for the Exit Session.

Beth J. Bridgforth is Director of Community and Continuing Education at East Arkansas Community College in Forrest City.

Jan C. Haven is Vice President for Academic Affairs at East Arkansas Community College in Forrest City.

Conducting a Self-Study and Team Visit on a Dime: How Small Colleges Can Achieve a Quality Self-Study and Team Visit with Limited Human and Financial Resources

Dorothy Phillips
Kay Luft

Background

Saint Luke's College, a single-purpose, upper-division institution of higher education, awards the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. The College is affiliated with Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City, and together they are part of a large health system that includes other hospitals, clinics, home health services, and related ventures. Saint Luke's College currently has 109 students enrolled, and admits 55-60 students annually every fall semester.

Throughout the self-study and preparations for the NCA team visit at our institution in November 1998, the two NCA Co-Coordinators and other faculty members who served as NCA Task Force members continued to perform their usual teaching, advising, and committee responsibilities. As a small college with limited human and financial resources, it was not possible to offer additional time or monies to committee members. The payoff, however, was that we were granted continued accreditation by NCA with the next comprehensive review scheduled in ten years. In addition, we were commended by our evaluation team for the evaluative manner in which our Self-Study Report was written.

Planning the Self-Study

☐ **Identify Your Resources**

- ◇ **Human.** Identifying available human resources is an important first step in the planning process. Once resources are identified responsibilities can be delegated to individuals with special skills or knowledge related to the tasks needing to be performed/addressed. For instance, it is important that your financial aid officer be a member of the self-study team as only this person can effectively address the financial aide packages available to students. We found that having two people share the task of coordinating the self-study process lessened the stress on both individuals who were already carrying full-time responsibilities.
  - ○ Co-Coordinators
  - ○ Team members (faculty, student services staff, registrar, etc.)
  - ○ Dean
  - ○ Students

    - NCA staff liaison
    - Secretarial staff
    - Alumni
    - Community members

  - ◇ **Technological.** Conducting a successful self-study process and team visit would have been very difficult without adequate technology and equipment. Technological support greatly enhanced the capabilities of team members to complete their tasks in an efficient and timely manner. In addition, having access to an individual who had special technological skills was invaluable and, in this manner, human resources interfaced with technological support. Examples of technology to which we had access during this accreditation process unlike the previous accreditation included:
    - computers for writing, storing and retrieving data, and producing graphic designs
    - e-mail, fax machine, and Internet access for communication
    - binding machine

  - ◇ **Financial.** Other than the NCA fees for accreditation and funds used for the co-coordinators to attend two NCA Annual Meetings and for producing hard copies of the Self-Study Report, there were essentially no other major expenses incurred. In retrospect, we could have better anticipated financial needs to support the self-study and team visit. For instance, we could have requested budgeted funds for more editorial and secretarial assistance and some compensation for those faculty who gave many hours of non-contract time to produce the Self-Study Report. Financial support for this accreditation process came primarily from two sources:
    - annual budget
    - St. Luke's Hospital Foundation

☐ **Develop and Stick to Your Timeline**

  - Start early. Allow yourself plenty of time--at least two years before your visit, if possible.
  - Take advantage of networking opportunities at the NCA Annual Meeting. Plan to attend the Self-Study Fair. Consider purchasing sample Self-Study Reports.
  - Make your timeline work for you. Take into consideration team members schedules, break times, and deadlines for assignments.
  - Include time for the NCA staff liaison to review the Self-Study Report.
  - Allow buffer time. Expect the unexpected!!

Conducting the Self-Study

☐ **Gathering/Organizing Data**

  - Match assignments to the special skills and knowledge of your self-study team members.
  - Utilize criteria as a framework for delegating tasks and organizing information.
  - Make your institution's assessment plan work for you. This was our most valuable tool for retrieving data necessary for the report.

☐ **Writing the Report**

  - Select one writer in order to maintain consistency of writing style and flow of the report.
  - If funds are limited your coordinators may serve as editors.

- ○ Make certain that data presented in the Self-Study Report contains evaluation.
- ○ Take advantage of the opportunity to have the NCA staff liaison preview your Self-Study Report draft.
- ○ Work on one computer–or make sure that your equipment is compatible to avoid problems.

Orchestrating the Evaluation Team Visit

☐ **Getting Ready**

- ○ Identify documents that will be needed in the resource room as the Self-Study Report is written. Don't wait until the last minute.
- ○ Assign an individual with a special talent for organizing and an eye for detail to be in charge of the resource room.
- ○ Clarify who will make arrangements for air travel, hotel, and ground transportation.
- ○ Prepare staff, faculty, and students for the team visit. Be creative, but informative!

☐ **Special Needs and Comfort Measures**

- ○ Anticipate needs of the team members. Clarify what supplies and equipment will be needed, e.g., phones, computer outlets, etc.
- ○ Provide adequate workspace in a well-lighted and comfortable area.
- ○ Provide refreshments for the evaluation team.
- ○ Assign a contact person from the task force to be available to provide for additional needs.

☐ **Survival Skills for the Site Visit**

- ○ Relax! If you are well-prepared and well-informed, the visitors will recognize this.
- ○ Support each other. Debriefing periods allow for release of stress throughout the visit.
- ○ Let the visitors get to know you. Be honest, not evasive.
- ○ Impress them with what you have accomplished as a small institution with limited resources.
- ○ If your report is complete, the team members will be looking mainly for confirmation. Ensure that what they see at your institution is congruent with what you have described in your report.

Challenges: The Pros and Cons of Being a Small Institution Striving for a Successful Accreditation Review

☐ **Pros**

- ○ There was ready access to the people in our department/institution.
- ○ The co-coordinator approach worked very well.
- ○ The co-coordinators communicated with the NCA staff liaison when there were questions and had her review a draft of the report before it was finalized. The NCA staff liaison was very helpful.
- ○ Writing our own Self-Study Report greatly enhanced our knowledge of computer programs and our computer skills.
- ○ The achievement of continued accreditation with ten years to the next review was celebrated. ALL faculty and staff experienced a sense of personal accomplishment.

☐ **Cons**

- ○ The time involved in the self-study and preparing for the team visit was in addition to a full teaching load.
- ○ Planning meetings when all task force members could attend was difficult.
- ○ Many extra work hours were contributed to the self-study process and site visit preparations.

Dorothy Phillips and Kay Luft are Assistant Professors of Nursing at St. Luke's College in Kansas City, Missouri.

But How Do We Reach Them All?

Elaine M. Klein
Joseph Wiesenfarth

"In-reach," or the process of communicating with internal audiences, is an ongoing challenge at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where, in the 1998-99 academic year, we enrolled 40,109 students, had a faculty headcount of 1,957, and employed a staff–both academic and classified civil service–in the neighborhood of 12,243. The NCA requirement that the university share information about the self-study process with its internal and external audiences posed a particular challenge; the further requirement to solicit third party comment three months prior to the April 12-14, 1999, team visit only added to that challenge.

The Chair and staff of UW-Madison's New Directions: The Reaccreditation Project, in cooperation with several other UW-Madison offices, took advantage of a broad array of communication forms to apprize our various audiences about the self-study's progress. These included press releases, web-based and print publications, direct mail, marketing materials, fliers, newspaper and magazine advertisements, public meetings, and a radio program. Third party comment was explained and sought throughout, with only a few additional, formal requests for comment in the months preceding the site visit.

Target Audiences

The New Directions staff determined that the target audiences for solicitation of Third Party Comment included students, alumni, members of the university community, Madison community leaders, and members of the legislature. The interest of these groups would not be limited, however, to the request for comment. Each would also have a keen interest in the three-part charge issued New Directions: to answer the requirements for reaccreditation, to evaluate the current UW-Madison strategic plan, and to write the next strategic plan. Reaching these groups would require an integrated effort among already existing university networks. Advice and assistance was therefore solicited from university staff responsible for community and state relations, the editor of the campus newspaper, and the director of the Office of News and Public Affairs.

Communication Methods

The New Directions staff and its advisors determined that the following methods would reach the targeted constituencies. These methods would, in many cases, reach overlapping groups.

◇ **Online.** The New Directions website, in operation since October 1997, supplemented traditional communication methods. Online publication allowed us:

  ○ to post timely explanations and updates about the process;

  ○ to link to additional resources so our visitors might inform themselves about our work to the extent they desired;

  ○ to refer to the website, where visitors would find extensive, current information;

  ○ to post pages of "virtual" news clippings, participant names and e-mail addresses;

  ○ to post drafts for review by anyone–students, faculty, staff, alumni, or legislators–with an interest in the project.

In May 1998, a brief description of the Third Party Comment process was posted on the site's main information page. That description included links to the NCA policy as well as to a special form describing the process. In February 1999, a reverse-subdomain review of hits on the website revealed that the site received visitors from commercial and educational internet providers world-wide, with the majority coming from the ".edu" domain and from UW-Madison ("wisc.edu") in particular. The Third Party Comment page was requested approximately 18 times a month between August 1998 and February 1999.

- **In person.** Project participants were encouraged to meet with groups across campus from the University Academic Planning Council to the Council of Deans as well as to Divisional Committee and Departmental meetings, taking advantage of the captive audiences that were readily available. One subcommittee held focus groups for staff; another held a brainstorming session for students. Public forums, advertised in the student papers, were called to discuss draft documents. Student participation in the site visit was solicited (and found) at a volunteer fair. At each event the self-study process, from reaccreditation to strategic planning, was explained.

- **Marketing materials.** In June 1998, as part of our effort to inform the campus about the Reaccreditation project in general, we designed a bookmark advertising the project. It succinctly describes our charge; solicits assistance; announces the evaluation team's visit; offers contact information (e-mail, website, physical location, telephone and fax); and concludes with a brief statement about "The Public and the NCA." The bookmarks were distributed widely in person at meetings; they were also set out on counters at the campus libraries and in local business establishments. The design and copy of the bookmark were adapted to other materials, including the advertisements discussed below, as well as to various flyers. These materials were also distributed at presentations made by New Directions staff and participants across campus throughout the self-study process. In the weeks prior to the visit, flyers were posted around campus, the better to inform students.

- **Direct mail** was used several times throughout the process.

    - Focus groups were developed, students were invited to brainstorming sessions, and follow-up progress reports were shared with these participants.

    - With the assistance of our liaisons for Community and State Relations, letters concerning Third Party Comment were sent to community and legislative leaders in October 1998 and in January 1999. These letters informed recipients of progress on the project, invited them to review online materials, and asked them to contact the NCA to offer comment.

    - Two weeks before the team visit, the faculty and staff were sent postcards reminding them of our important guests and asking them to familiarize themselves with our work. Most importantly, we invited everyone to join us in welcoming the team.

    - When the Self-Study Report was complete, copies were sent to administrators and to every dean, assistant dean, department chair, and directors of centers or institutes. Since the study was also posted online, an email was also sent to deans, directors, and department chairs (with a request to forward it) to announce the Self-Study's location.

- **Alumni outreach.** A formal advertisement soliciting Third Party Comment was prepared for publication in the Winter 1998 issue of On Wisconsin magazine, UW-Madison's alumni magazine. With a distribution of 250,000, this magazine reaches alumni, parents, legislators, and business leaders locally, nationally, and internationally.

- **Press releases and news articles.** Wisconsin Week, the official campus newspaper, published several articles (also issued as press releases) about the project between January and May 1998. In November, timed for release with the On Wisconsin and other Third Party Comment advertisements, a press release on the comment requirement was prepared and sent to local and state newspapers in November 1998. Timed to appear with the ads, the release offered more information about the project (including contact information and the website address) in case the ads provoked further interest. Every press release issued also appeared on the Wisconsin Week Wire, an e-mail network that disseminates information about the university. The Daily Cardinal and The Badger Herald, the two student newspapers, also picked up some of these press releases. A list of articles was maintained as a "virtual clippings file" on the website.

- **Local advertisements.** Between December 1998 and February 1999, formal advertisements soliciting third party comment were placed in local papers, including the official state newspaper, one student paper, the free alternative press weekly, and a local weekly that targets an audience of people of color.

- **Public radio.** The chair of our evaluation team was interviewed on a public radio call-in show during the site visit.

Observations

Throughout this process we were pleased to discuss our work with many people. Rather than finding the additional requirement to solicit Third Party Comment onerous, we valued the information gleaned from the telephone calls and e-mails we received. Often our callers and correspondents had seen the request for third party comment and elected to contact us directly to offer feedback that contributed to the evaluation and planning process. Some individuals expressed an interest in our future progress, some asked if they could assist us, and others expressed concern that the university was being reviewed at all. In all cases we welcomed the opportunity to explain the self-study process to our community.

Among the methods described above, the most costly was the placement of the advertisement in On Wisconsin; however, by using the same copy and setup for all other Third Party Comment ads, that expense was minimized. The bookmark was a more cost-effective effort. It summed up the project so well, people who were not directly involved passed copies on to their colleagues–it rapidly became ubiquitous. It was also cost effective (and timely) to send postcards to employees across campus: when the evaluation team arrived, many people could recall having been told "company's coming!"

Ultimately, however, our decision to integrate discussion of Third Party Comment into the overall discussion of the project eased all costs while also quelling anxiety about the requirement to solicit comment. As part of the general discussion, it was simply another part of an important process rather than something to fear. As a public institution, we have a continuous responsibility to understand and anticipate public concerns, and, invited or not, we receive comment. We could, therefore, anticipate issues that might arise as a result of the request for comment. However, the ensuing silence upon known issues (and indeed, the absence of any substantive comment received), assured us not only that we had communicated widely throughout the process, but that we had also been doing so as a matter of course, well beyond the boundaries of the requirement.

Elaine M. Klein is Executive Assistant to the Chair, New Directions: The Reaccreditation Project, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Joseph Wiesenfarth is Chair, New Directions: The Reaccreditation Project, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Facing (and Listening to) the Music: Effective Use of the Third Party Comment Process

Jean K. Mulhern

The NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (Commission) added a required third party comment process in 1996, effective in the 1997-1998 academic year. Initiating an efficient and effective process is the first priority for any institution preparing for a comprehensive visit for the first time since 1997. The college or university needs to meet not only the minimum requirements but also incorporate the process into more meaningful ongoing assessment and strategic planning processes.

The popular phrase "facing the music" refers to meeting squarely an unpleasant consequence. You may assure your campus the comment process is not about "facing the music," but that it is certainly a listening and learning experience. Those of us who have completed an evaluation process since 1997 have sufficient positive experiences to confidently reassure those new to it. I confirmed this positive observation in interviews with representatives from several other institutions. They report that, despite some trepidation, the public comment process provided an additional means of validating self-study conclusions. While third party comments might relate to negative issues, most comments will highlight strong programs and significant achievements. The "music" will identify which characteristics and programs are valued most highly by the respondents. Careful listening will be rewarding to the institution.

Background

The Commission has been committed to making the accreditation process more visible, more accountable to the public and to broadening participation. In response to the Higher Education Act, as amended by Congress in 1992, C.F.R. § 602.27(d), the Commission developed appropriate requirements and helpful fulfillment guidelines. These requirements are detailed in the second edition of the *Handbook of Accreditation* and a working draft of an enhanced third party comment policy is on the NCA CIHE website (www.ncacihe.org). Both the Commission and the institution have a responsibility to publicize a forthcoming comprehensive evaluation and to elicit comments from various publics concerning the institution's application. Most institutions use every opportunity to combine announcements about the evaluation with invitations to comment. No public hearing is required.

For NCA accreditation purposes, the term "third party comment" refers to the process of notifying various constituencies (stakeholders, publics) about the forthcoming accreditation evaluation of the institution and inviting them to mail signed, written comments to the Chicago office of the Commission.

Since the initial concern of an institution preparing for a comprehensive evaluation is to fulfill the specified requirements in detail, the following section of this report provides a pragmatic overview, tempered by recent experience. A later section will suggest a value-added approach to integrating the third party comments with institution planning processes.

Designing the Third Party Comment Process

Planning is the key to a productive comment process. The comment process should be part of the self-study plan. The third party comment process is meaningless if it is treated as a separate and bothersome requirement, one more hurdle to clear.

One or two members of the self-study committee should be charged with drafting a comment process tailored to the institution, to be approved by the full committee. Adhere to the guidelines and sample text provided by the Commission in its most recent *Handbook of Accreditation* edition and later submit to the Commission's Research Associate the appropriate required materials documenting the plan and its implementation. The guidelines are clear and easy to follow. The institution must demonstrate that it has accomplished a well-timed notification and comment process in good faith; three complimentary letters from alumni association officers do not demonstrate the results of a good faith plan.

The planning steps recommended are as follows:

- Identify all generic constituents (stakeholders, publics), internal and external. Beyond the "big six" (students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, trustees), include publics likely to bring more objective or specialized frames of reference (local elected officials, employers of recent graduates, vendors, business and corporate partners, officials of neighboring and consortia institutions, community leaders, local media officials, affiliated church groups, K-12 partners, etc.)
- Group the publics according to appropriate common notification strategies and timelines.
- Develop a detailed action calendar with most notifications scheduled at least three or four months prior to the team visit.
- Develop an institution-specific portfolio of press releases, fliers, posters, letters appropriate to various administrative units, memos, web pages, spoken announcements to be used in meetings, paid advertisement designs, displays, and public service announcements (a great student project).
- Build a name and address (contact) database (start with existing departmental databases).
- While controlling costs, consider creative links through local television, cable television, radio, mass voicemail, and electronic mail. Identify campus, community, and alumni events that can be effective venues for requesting public comment.
- Maintain an implementation portfolio documenting all notification and comment activities as well as dates and ways various publics were notified. Supply the portfolio to the Commission and include a copy in the team's resource room. Be prepared to discuss the process and the content with the team.

The public relations specialist on campus should be involved, especially to review the content and style of the portfolio of press releases and other texts. Try not to divert the public relations unit from its important ongoing activities. Once the comment plan and portfolio have been approved, a volunteer student group or clerical unit could implement the plan. The self-study committee should coordinate the process. One member of the self-study committee might monitor the implementation activities, assuring that target publics are notified appropriately in a timely manner. Where possible, use existing public comment channels. Remember that some publics may meet on campus as advisory committees to various departments (provide take-home fliers). To reach a constituency (such as alumni who meet annually or have irregular publications) might mean making contact many months in advance of the team visit.

Addressing Internal Resistance

Both public and private institutions of higher education have "publics" to be informed, involved, and included if they are to provide strong, continuing support. Still, resistance to third party participation and comment occurs. Sadly, some institutions are faced with threatening circumstances, external or internal. Marshall W. Meyer (1997), a member of the Wharton School (University of Pennsylvania) faculty, described the theory of threat-rigidity, an organizational response sometimes exhibited in institutions undergoing a period of crisis or decline. Symptoms of threat-rigidity include centralization of control, withholding of information, and scapegoating. Meyer suggests that while management in these situations is not easy, "openness and realism are preferable to the secrecy that usually surrounds decision making in declining organizations." (from pp. 570-579).

The third party comment requirement can meet resistance from some administrators. Should a self-study committee detect internal resistance to implementing an open third party comment process, they need to proceed cautiously. Providing information about the Commission's requirements and the comment plan most often overcomes reluctance and skepticism. Alternative strategies can be employed. Finally, the committee is alerted that the institution or a part of the institution might be in crisis and the Self-Study Report should address a verified situation.

Public Comment Packets are Distributed

Two weeks prior to the evaluation team visit, the Commission's public comment coordinator will send duplicate packets of public comments to the team coordinator and to the institution. (Comments focused on specific personal complaints are not forwarded, if received, but are handled through the Commission's separate complaint process.) The distribution of third party comment packets provides the institution a final opportunity to assess the thoroughness of its self-study in relation to alternative frames of reference. Both the evaluation team and the campus self-study committee members examine the comments for general themes relating to strengths, weaknesses, and noteworthy topics. The evaluation team compares the themes raised in the comments with the findings of the Self-Study Report, looking for confirmations and potential omissions. During the team's campus visit, they may seek additional information related to issues raised in the public comments. The team is expected to assess the institution's comment process in the Team Report. The institution may provide additional information to the team related to the public comments should that be appropriate. The institution also may choose to respond to the third party comment process at the same time that it responds to the Team Report.

The comment packet always arrives on a campus when preparations for the team visit are most active. To expedite use of the comments during this busy time, the member of the self-study committee who oversaw the comment process should review and evaluate the comments, draft an institutional response if appropriate, report findings appropriately, and distribute a campus report in a form useful for assessment and strategic planning. The summary report might identify key concerns, issues, observations, and compliments and should enumerate the numbers and general profiles of those commenting. Maintain the privacy of the individuals.

For my campus, about 35 comments (from students, area college presidents, and a few others) were included in the packet we received in March 1999. The Commission coordinator noted that she considered that number to be adequate. My institution derived the following types of insights from our comment packet:

- identified key programs and values recognized by other nearby colleges and universities (received from institution presidents)
- confirmed student concerns with campus facilities
- affirmed student appreciation for the opportunity for a college education provided by the institution
- affirmed general awareness of the mission of the college
- highlighted the need for continued and intensified focus on the writing-across-the-curriculum academic program

Avoiding the Post-Visit Disconnect

Critical reflection is a popular buzz-phrase heard on campuses today. The institutional self-study is the ultimate engagement in critical self-reflection, actively involving internal and external constituencies of the institution. Third party comments, supplying informal qualitative data, expand opportunities in the self-study process for openness and fresh insights. The institution that actively solicits public comments from a broad base of constituencies and then responds reflectively to those comments demonstrates "best practice" management. The challenge for the institution is to recognize the benefits and continue the practice.

The long-term importance of the third party comment process is its potential impact on assessment and strategic planning processes. All institutions are challenged to protect the voluntary nature of the accreditation process by paying continuing attention to Commission accreditation criteria. The Commission seeks to assist its member institutions in using the best practices of administration and management. Ideally, the techniques developed for involving the institution's publics with the comprehensive evaluation can be incorporated into the ongoing campus processes on an annual basis.

The long-term and ongoing benefits of continuing public comment strategies are several. Third party comments can be used to help an institution stay in touch with and be responsive to its many publics between comprehensive accreditation visits. Being invited to comment on a campus initiative is flattering to those included and can be seen as a means of outreach and bridge building. Comments are a means of stimulating valuable institutional self-reflection. However biased, however enthusiastic or critical, all third party comments, as alternative frames of reference, can be put to use immediately in strengthening the institution.

Observations from Related Research

The federal requirement of third party comment in accreditation processes is based on its use in government processes and programs. Government agencies' third party comment processes have been subjected to research with conclusions that have transference to academic settings.

One formal study measured the success of public participation (comment) in selected activities of the U.S. Department of Energy (Carnes, etal., 1998). The researchers made the following recommendations:

- Public participation should be well organized.
- Participation strategies and mechanisms should be evaluated and improved.
- Stakeholders should be asked to participate (comment) early in the process, including consideration of such fundamentals as mission and objectives.
- The costs of the comment process should be appropriate and sensible. Seeking public comment need not be an expensive process.

A similar study in the United Kingdom (House, 1999) found that third party participation can be at three levels: formal (public hearings), informal (written public comment, focus groups, and open forums), and direct (advisory or decision-making groups). The Commission's third party comment process is informal; however, an institution may choose to use all three levels. House's research showed that all levels of third party involvement result in increased public education, awareness, and understanding.

James D. Proctor (1998), in his environmental policy research, found that an agency would be well advised to evaluate the general message of public comments for the values expressed. When practicable, of course, the agency should act on the public concerns. Even if the direction of a proposal cannot be changed, the values expressed should be recognized or discussed in planning documents. Constituency members' ownership increases when their concerns and values are given attention, although their specific goals may not be achieved.

Conclusion

Reviewing your third party comment packet is like listening to a new piece of music–you're hoping for a pleasant experience but remain alert and open to challenging insights. Even familiar constituencies, given an invitation to comment, can introduce new perspectives, like new motifs and rhythms. The third party comment process is all about "facing (and listening) to the music."

References

Carnes, S. A., M. Schweitzer, E. B. Peelle, A. K.Wolfe, and J. F. Munro. 1998. Measuring the success of public participation on environmental restoration and waste management activities in the U.S. Department of Energy. *Technology in society*. 20:385-406. OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center full-text service.

House, Margaret A. 1999. Citizen participation in water management. *Water science and technology*. 40:125-130. OhioLINK EJC full-text.

Meyer, Marshall W. 1997. Organizational decline and failure. In *IEBM Handbook of organizational behavior*. Arndt Sorge and Malcolm Warner, eds. Boston: International Thomson Business Press. Excerpted on the ITBP official website: http://www.itbp.com/ob/iebm/organizational_decline_and_failu.htm, 01/20/2000.

Proctor, James D. 1998. Environmental values and popular conflict over environmental management: A comparative analysis of public comments on the Clinton Forest Plan. *Environmental management* 22(03 May):347-358. OhioLINK EJC full-text.

Jean K. Mulhern is Library Director of the Rembert E. Stokes Library at Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio.

Practical Advice and Useful Survey Tools to Expedite the Collection of Data and Writing the Self-Study Report and to Set the Stage for Ongoing Improvement: A Private Liberal Arts College Shares Its Knowledge and Experience

Marguerite M. Bennett

Introduction

Self-Study Coordinators often do not know where to begin in the process of comprehensive evaluation. Using regional accreditation criteria and patterns of evidence to develop survey instruments provides a logical and practical approach to gather evaluative information systematically from divisions and departments. The advantages of using two similar yet tailored questionnaires to assess the effectiveness of an institution's academic and administrative programs include standardization of reporting, input from all campus personnel, on-line access and submission, and cross-departmental/divisional interaction. The office of institutional research and the self-study steering committee coordinated the development, administration, and implementation of the survey tools. There were many benefits and several challenges in collecting, organizing, and integrating numerous departmental/divisional reports into a single document and maintaining institutional commitment and momentum. The experience has yielded practical insights that the college is willing to share with other institutions in the beginning stages of self-study. It is hoped that the following paragraphs will help to expedite the report-writing process and to set the stage for ongoing self-study at other private, liberal arts institutions.

Issues Addressed

One of the self-study goals of a Christian liberal arts college was to utilize existing academic and administrative structures to evaluate the institution's effectiveness in accomplishing its mission. Past self-studies had followed a task-specific committee organization, including committees for the sole purpose of preparing for the self-study (e.g., mission and goals) and special instruments (e.g., Institutional Goals Inventory). Their tasks completed, these ad hoc committees were dissolved, and continued research in these areas or subsequent use of these surveys was sporadic at best. In contrast, a number of research studies and program evaluations were ongoing and systematically conducted (e.g., five-year academic departmental program review).

Additionally, some faculty members complained that in the past they had contributed much time and effort to gathering data and writing reports used only for the purpose of the self-study with no lasting impact upon decision-making. Sensitive to faculty workload, the Self-Study Coordinator sought the means of equitably distributing the "work," while making it worthwhile vis-à-vis the department's concern with self-improvement.

Tailoring questionnaires to important campus-wide issues and standard departmental concerns seemed a more effective approach than a general request for departments and divisions "to evaluate" themselves. Involving all academic and administrative departments and divisions in a standardized process and focusing upon the institution's mission united the entire campus. Furthermore, the use of standing committees, departmental personnel, ongoing surveys, and other assessment techniques created a culture of evaluation that, hopefully, will continue beyond the completion of the Self-Study Report.

The Survey Instruments—Purpose and Design

Two related survey tools were designed to collect information. A questionnaire became the standard format for evaluating the effectiveness of the divisions and their respective departments. The North Central Association's five Criteria for Accreditation and patterns of evidence (NCA, 1997) served as the backbone of the surveys, which were designed to assess academic and administrative programs, respectively.

The overarching purpose of the questionnaire and the areas to be included were summarized in the instructions. Academic division chairs were to summarize divisional strengths and challenges from their respective departmental surveys. Department chairs were to involve all members in the evaluation process, utilizing initial department-wide dialogue or distributed responsibility followed by consensus building.

Development of Meaningful and Reflective Questions, Utilizing NCA Criteria

The questions were designed to elicit evaluative and reflective, instead of factual, responses. Part I addressed the first NCA criterion. Departments and divisions were not allowed simply to list their goals or to classify them according to which institutional goals they fulfilled. Rather, the series of questions led them to reflect upon how their goals unified the departments/divisions; how faculty contributed to the accomplishment of the goals in unique ways; what goals had been achieved successfully and become strengths; and how they would resolve any remaining challenges in the future. In other words, departments/divisions were required to grapple with issues, including a review of specifics (e.g., number of majors and graduates and new initiatives).

Criterion Two was addressed in similar fashion. Part II of the instrument provided questions on departmental/divisional human resources (governance and administration, instructional personnel, enrolled students, curriculum and instructional methods, and scholarship and research); financial; physical; and other resources. Additionally, questions addressed areas of special interest (e.g., library resources and technology). Again, the procedure encouraged faculty to reflect upon experiences, to make evaluative observations, and to provide evidence to substantiate them.

It is recommended that institutions plan to develop questions to evaluate challenges identified during former self-studies and/or areas of institutional emphasis. For example, within the three years prior to its comprehensive visit, the college had completed the construction of a new library with a focus upon improving its services, resources, and academic offerings. Also, a former 1993-94 faculty/staff study had identified technology concerns that had been addressed over several years. The self-study provided a timely opportunity for re-evaluation in that important and rapidly changing arena as well.

Similar techniques were used to assess NCA's criteria three and four. Part III was designed to elicit feedback regarding the general education program and individual courses and activities relevant for accomplishment of the institution's purposes. Questions encouraged faculty to reflect upon general education's role in developing and strengthening students' understanding of personal, social, and civic values and in requiring and facilitating their intellectual interaction with other students and with faculty. Also under criterion three, faculty members were expected to provide evidence documenting their assessment of student academic achievement. Tables were included to simplify faculty reporting. For example, one table focused upon student outcome indicators following college graduation. Part IV addressed planning. This section focused upon such things as future program plans, effective responses to unexpected challenges, and successful examples of program strengthening.

Administrative Details

The steering committee was composed of sixteen members, including the college president and the self-study coordinator. Each steering committee member represented either an academic or administrative division. The steering committee included representatives of all faculty and staff divisions, and, although large in size, it worked well toward its common purposes. Steering committee members had responsibility for the oversight of the questionnaires. Their involvement continued throughout the process and included responsibility for revisions of individual chapters and the final report, meetings with the NCA evaluation team, and responses to the Team Report.

The academic and administrative surveys differed according to the major emphases dictated by the criteria and the nature of the divisions. For example, the academic questionnaires included items related to instructional support areas and to student learning outcomes in general education and in the various academic majors. In contrast, administrative surveys included items related to budgeting processes, printing and mailing, and technology support.

Surveys in on-line and hard-copy formats given to steering committee members were then distributed to department heads and administrative mid-level managers. The surveys served as guides designed to facilitate discussion of selected aspects of the unit's operation and to provide a standard reporting format. All survey questions were evaluative in nature, although some factual data occasionally were required to illustrate analyses (e.g., profile tables of faculty and assessment grids). The office of institutional research became the liaison for the motivation and completion of the departmental reports.

Departmental and Divisional Reports

The respective departmental and divisional reports became the foundation of the institution's self-study. Every department was required to provide input. Also, certain survey questions had been tailored to address institutional concerns about specific academic issues (e.g., library/information and computer technology resources) or administrative areas (e.g., printing/mailing, accounting/purchasing, housekeeping/maintenance, and technology resources).

Departmental reports were used to construct the summaries of divisional effectiveness. They were, in most cases, reviewed by the steering committee members and received recommendations for revision by the departments. The department reports were generally completed through a united effort of the respective members. Frequent reminders via group-email and personal follow-up encouraged one hundred percent departmental response. Factors such as the timeliness of completed five-year program review greatly affected and expedited the writing of academic departmental self-study reports. Depending upon the size of the department, the workload, and other departmentally-unique factors, administrative reports were completed within as few as three months to as long as eleven months.

The planning section contained examples of departmental decision making processes and departmental/divisional needs analyses and planning priorities. Sharing the final report had the benefit of providing faculty and staff with a broader, more realistic perspective of departmental challenges and budgetary priorities campus-wide. The office of institutional research will continue its vital role in institutional assessment and continuous improvement not only by promoting ongoing updates to the survey findings, but also by facilitating collaborative initiatives among faculty and staff to meet intra-institutional priorities.

Special Emphasis on Assessment

Beginning the comprehensive self-study process and summarizing student-learning goals and outcomes for all majors seemed like an overwhelming task for faculty and staff. Providing academic departments and divisions with surveys and practical formats for assessment-reporting standardized the process for the institution; encouraged department leaders to focus upon the evaluative data and implications instead of upon tools and formats; and enabled faculty to refine and revise their procedures to improve student outcomes. Although all departments were using multiple assessment techniques, not all had consistently documented what was being used, in which courses, and with what results. Preparing a notebook of all departmental assessment forms and making it available to interested faculty benefited not only the assessment committee but also those departments with less assessment know-how.

Therefore, in addition to the questionnaire's section on assessment, a five-part form was developed to summarize departmental assessments of majors. Separate grids were designed for faculty to identify which assessment measures/tools were used to accomplish departmental student-learning goals, in which individual courses, and which goals were addressed by departmental courses. A summary grid of program goals, multiple assessment measures used by departments, major findings, projected budgets, and the results of the feedback loop was further supplemented by an executive summary page that focused on the department's assessment highlights and new initiatives, distinctive feedback techniques, and suggestions for improvement. Providing the forms on-line greatly simplified and expedited departmental usage. The institution's standing assessment committee met monthly throughout the academic year. The assistance of two ad hoc subcommittees was necessary to revise the "assessment matrix" (data used to assess institutional student learning goals) and to review the departmental assessment summaries for the *Assessment Notebook of Academic Departments*. The assessment committee has continued oversight of campus assessment.

Estimated Time to Completion

Beginning at least twenty-four months prior to the college's scheduled team visit allowed sufficient time to adequately involve the campus community in comprehensive self-study. Several months were required to assemble a self-study team, to achieve consensus on outcome goals for the process, and to construct and revise appropriate survey instruments. Preparation by the coordinator and steering committee in terms of planning, establishing guidelines, garnering support, and creating institution-wide commitment saved time and energy, as well as precluded morale problems.

Some departments required as long as twelve months to gain consensus among members on strengths, challenges, and future planning/budget priorities. Divisions needed at least three months to review the departmental reports and to write and revise divisional reports. The draft of the Self-Study Report and review by the committee took three months. During the last three months, trustees, faculty, and staff reviewed the document, suggested revisions, and gave their approval.

Concluding Remarks

Institutional self-study requires increased time and work on the part of the steering committee and coordinator, as well as campus-wide commitment and genuine collaboration of faculty and staff. Whether or not faculty and staff buy into the process and contribute the necessary time and energy required and whether they view the experience as worth the effort and as valuable to the institution will depend upon the degree of the institution's commitment to ongoing use of the results. Consequently, keeping faculty and staff continually informed of the self-study's progress and the improvements resulting from it are critical to maintaining their support. Recognizing that institutions are dynamic and that most improvements require longer commitments than the two or more years devoted to self-study further serves to emphasize the importance of ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement.

Reference

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA/CIHE). 1997. *Handbook of accreditation,* 2d ed. Chicago: NCA/CIHE.

Marguerite M. Bennett is Director of Institutional Research and Professor of Mathematics at Mount Vernon Nazarene College in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

Evaluation Versus Description: Conducting the Self-Study and Writing a Good Report

Stephen D. Rowe
Kay L. Clawson

Introduction

The process of organizing and implementing an institutional self-study for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) can be organically linked to the production of the written report that documents an institution's examination of itself. If a self-study has been cursorily conducted or has neglected to consider key principles of regional accreditation, the written account of such an analysis may well depict only the mechanical processes that were utilized to produce the report. Such a document, because it will lack substantive content, will be difficult for an NCA team to use in its initial evaluation of an institution's self-study. Similarly, a comprehensive and effective self-study is not well represented by a written report that only describes the chronology of the self-study and its conclusions. If, from the very beginning, a coordinating committee conducts a data-intensive evaluation, the written report of this study may naturally follow the investigative outline to produce a written account that guides an outside reader through evaluation rather than presenting a simple descriptive narrative of it.

Setting Up the Self-Study

By considering institutional analysis and a subsequent written account of it from the onset of self-study as inseparable, the Self-Study Coordinator or committee may develop a concept of focus for each–the study and the report–which will provide a clear matrix for action and a formal structure for later written presentation. This is not to suggest that institutional analysis or reporting on it may be reduced to a simple "fill-in-the-blanks" format. Quite the contrary, institutional distinctiveness will assure that every analysis and report derived from this method will be unique; an institution that utilizes this process should produce a distinctive narrative report of how it has used NCA accreditation guidelines and its own strategic components to study itself.

The following may seem self-evident components of any rationally-conducted analysis, but the listing is helpful to elucidate the technique of study and narrative reporting. The Self-Study Coordinator(s) using this process will have initiated a pattern for action, established patterns of evidence, and developed an implicit format by which a written report may present the entire process. The principle parts of the technique may be stated as:

1. Reason(s) for evaluation
2. Patterns of evidence
3. Data required for evaluation
4. Analysis of data
5. Conclusions of evaluation

1. **Reasons for evaluation.** As an initial objective of self-study, the governing board, chief executive, coordinating committee, administrators, and institutional community should reach consensus on why the self-study is being conducted, and the process by which that consensus has been reached should be documented. Obviously, satisfying the NCA requirement for accreditation will be a central incentive for this institutional analysis. If there are corollary reasons for analysis (for example, a coupling of the NCA process to that of institutional strategic planning), such reason(s) for action should also be clearly articulated and documented at this stage of the study.

2. **Criteria for evaluation.** After having established and agreed upon why the study will be conducted, the coordinating body should articulate, gain consensus for, and document the criteria by which the institution will measure itself. A discrete list will focus the attention of the evaluative groups coordinated by the Committee as well as provide evaluative standards for them. The NCA General Institutional Requirements, NCA Criteria for Accreditation, institutional mission, strategic goals, assessment goals, etc., often provide the criteria for evaluation, but, again, an institutional dynamic may suggest that criteria other than those articulated by accreditation guidelines will be part of the evaluation process. Evaluative subcommittees should be provided with and clearly understand the criteria for evaluation for their particular areas of the study.

3. **Data required for evaluation.** Clearly established criteria for evaluation will tend to identify the institutional data required to provide for the means of analysis. It is at this stage of evaluation that institutional assessment data will be of particular value to self-study sub-committees. If the assessment of student academic achievement, for example, has begun to mature, these data will be invaluable to the self-study process. When the evaluating bodies have completed their compilation of data, the data should be retained in their raw form both for the committees' reference and to later document the collection of data.

4. **Analysis of data.** By whatever means the coordinating body has chosen to analyze data, this phase of self-study applies the criteria for evaluation, using the evidentiary resources compiled by the evaluators. Analysis of numerical or survey data is certainly subject to varied interpretive views, but whatever analytical approach is used, it should lead to logically defensible conclusions. Statistically relevant survey data will have more evaluative value than analysis rooted in shallow or incomplete data. If additional data are required to complete the analysis, they should be added to the data file as the study progresses. Documentation of the analytical process should be retained.

5. **Conclusions of evaluation.** Have agreed-upon institutional goals and objectives been reached? Does the institution miss, meet, or exceed its own and the NCA guidelines and criteria? How does the empirical evidence support the conclusions reached? Are there any post-evaluation actions indicated by the study? Who, when, and why should be documented at this stage in order that this verification may become part of the evaluative content of the written report.

Writing the Self-Study Report

When the entire evaluative process has been completed, the person(s) responsible for writing the Self-Study Report will have before them the presentation format, a narrative to tell, the main headings of the narrative, the bodies of evidence, and the conclusions ready for compilation into a written report of the self-study process. Of course, style and graphics will vary from document to document, but the evaluative phase of the self-study will have provided everything that the writer(s) will require to compose the report. Perhaps the most daunting task for the writers, given the documentary nature of a completed self-study, is how to condense such a large mass of material into a comprehensive and readable report that is not quite as long as *War and Peace*.

To create a written report that depicts the evaluative nature of the self-study, the writer(s) must keep in mind a fundamental principle of good writing—do not generalize without providing the bases of generalization. The premises upon which conclusions are based must be provided to the reader in order that the conclusions may ring with authority. Large portions of the evaluative activities may be best presented in paraphrase, but dates of meetings, composition of committees, discrete committee decisions, board of director resolutions...the hard data upon which conclusions have been based...should be presented by the written report. Numerical data, summarized or presented in tabular form, should be presented, interpreted, and source identified. Long, primary documents (such as articles of incorporation or written strategic plans) may be alluded to, but if their content is essential to supporting detail, these items should be presented in their entirety in appendices rather than in the text of the report. When conclusions are based upon data represented on pages other than those of the immediate text, the report should contain page references to guide a reader to the data.

The written report that presents only the conclusions of self-study or terse responses to the criteria used for evaluation will, of necessity, be descriptive rather than evaluative, no matter how effective the self-study process that preceded the report. For example, stating the NCA GIRs as questions and then answering them declaratively will not provide much insight for the NCA team, which is charged with assessing the evaluative process that produced such an answer. GIR 13 asks if the institution "…has degree programs in operation, with students enrolled in them." A simple yes/no response would seem to suffice here, but if the Self-Study Report is sole response to the GIR is: "Whatsomatta University presently has 15 bachelor's and two master's degree programs, all of which have students enrolled and working toward degrees," the report has deprived the reader of evaluative information such as how many students are enrolled in each program; what are the enrollment trends; which are the strongest/weakest of these programs; how many degrees have been awarded. Without too much commitment of printed space, Whatsomatta U. could have tabularized its degree program data and demonstrated how it manages enrollments as well as providing an NCA evaluator with some of the hard data by which it exercises such management. A pattern of evidence could have been presented and verified, and an institutional evaluative process would have then been illustrated by the written report.

The Self-Study Report must strive for presentation balance: just the right amount of narrative, concise, convincing data, clear graphics, appropriate appendices, a report index in the table of contents, a binding format that lies open easily. The data-intensive Self-Study Report that has been based upon and clearly reflects an evaluative self-study process sets the scene for the on-site phase of an accreditation review. Such a report will enable an NCA team to verify the validity of much of a self-study before entering into the on-site phase of evaluation. The team will likely have been guided to particular documentation that the self-study committee has collected in a resource room rather than in the text of the written report. Finally, the evaluative report will have the effect of providing the NCA team with it preliminary understanding of the institution's methodology and rationale in reaching its own conclusions of self-study.

The evaluative self-study process and the evaluative Self-Study Report…one cannot exist without the other. Both are correlative and mutually contribute to a self-study process that is finally and manifestly evaluative in nature.

Stephen D. Rowe is Library Director and Professor of English at Concord College in Athens, West Virginia.

Kay L. Clawson is Professor of Education at West Liberty State College in West Liberty, West Virginia.

Linear vs. Systemic Perspectives: The Processes and Outcomes of a Focused Visit One Year Later

Charles S. Weiner
Douglas N. McMillan

It is one thing to get ready for a comprehensive or focused visit; it is quite another to keep the momentum going once the visit is over. We all know how much time, effort, and work goes into a North Central Association visit. In the past at Southeastern the effort was to get ready for the visit. All the resources that were necessary were made available. Things that seemed impossible yesterday were done today. It is probably safe to say that the headiest time for a university to get things done is one to two years before the visit occurs. The struggle begins day one after the visit. For Southeastern the struggle began in earnest after the comprehensive visit in 1993.

The 1993 NCA comprehensive visit to Southeastern presented a very real challenge to the culture of the University. The NCA team presented the University with an opportunity to begin changing from a culture that had traditionally been very stability oriented to a culture that, in the future, would be more dynamic and willing to embrace change. But change has it price. Change has its detractors and disbelievers–those who are unwilling to embrace change, or believe that change is actually occurring.

The formal North Central self-study process for the 1998 focused visit began in the Summer of 1996 with the formation of the Self-Study Committee. For the first time in Southeastern's history the Self-Study Committee was solely comprised of faculty members. No administrators were part of this committee. One of the first items of business for the Committee was to pull out from the 1993 NCA Team Report those points that needed to be addressed in the focused visit. Those points were:

1. Southeastern Oklahoma State University is in compliance, inasmuch as the purposes are clearly and publicly stated, together with its mission, and are appropriate for this institution.
2. It is the judgment of the team that the University has adequately organized the resources necessary to accomplish its purpose. The Team repeats the concerns of the previous teams about the effectiveness of the participation of faculty in the University governance process.
3. The Team concludes that the institution is adequately accomplishing its purposes. The Team urges that the University give priority attention to the full participation of faculty in the shared oversight of curricula, assessment, program review, and planning.
4. In the judgment of the Team, the institution is urged to work with the appropriate governing bodies to give priority attention to developing the integration of faculty in the shared decision making that will lead to an effective system of program review, assessment, and institutional planning (Self-Study Report for a Focused Evaluation. (1998). Southeastern Oklahoma State University. p.1).

It was apparent from these points that shared governance and faculty participation were of a paramount concern, and would be thoroughly examined during the focused visit. The challenge for Southeastern was how–How to implement, how to foster change, and how to integrate the faculty and staff in the process. Sergiovanni (1997) asked the question, How can people who share the same goals and who have the same information wind up on different sides when issues of how to improve institutions are debated (p.31)? There is little doubt that the involvement and cooperation of many people were necessary for the successful implementation of a shared governance system. One person cannot and should not attempt to introduce and implement change singlehandedly. In order for change to occur though, there does need to be one highly placed, highly motivate, goal oriented individual, who must serve as the initial change agent.

Ensuring Effective CEO Support of the Self-Study

The first step in the process of changing the culture at Southeastern was to ensure the support of the chief executive officer (CEO) in listening to and working toward the mandate that this University was given by the 1993 evaluation team. The issues that were to be dealt with in the focused visit Self-Study Report were shared governance and assessment. What the Steering Committee discovered was that the CEO was very aware of not only addressing the issues listed in the previous visit, but addressing them successfully. It became the responsibility of the Steering Committee to develop the awareness of the CEO regarding the critical issues that were relevant to this focused visit as well as his efforts that would be needed for a successful focused visit.

The process began 18 months before the visit. What the Steering Committee did on a monthly basis was hold critical issue briefings. These briefings included the CEO, the Executive Team, and members of the Steering Committee. The briefings were focused around the critical issues that needed to be addressed prior to the focused visit. A rolling reporting system was developed. More specifically, a table of critical issues was developed that included the issue, the assigned person responsible for the issue, and a target date for completion. As issues were completed they were removed from the critical issues table and new ones were brought on as identified. This accomplished keeping the CEO and Executive Team abreast of the critical issues, the status of the critical issues, which critical issues had been completed, and what new critical issues were being addressed.

These briefings and the Critical Issues Table were invaluable in setting the tone and direction of the Self-Study Report. The CEO and the Executive Team were given specific assignments relevant to the changes that were being made. Also during these meetings it became apparent which tasks were being addressed, and which ones were not. The CEO and Executive Team were able to make specific follow up requests, and when necessary, ask for reports and information from individuals who were having trouble completing their tasks. This process proved to be very effective in developing the awareness and the commitment of the CEO and the Executive Team.

Strategies for Writing the Self-Study Report

The development of the self-study usually begins with a large group of people who comprise a steering committee. Early on it was decided that the steering committee for this visit would be a smaller group with the eventual outcome of involving more people as the process neared completion. The rationale behind having a smaller writing team was that in any group setting, as the process unfolds, the number of people who actually do the writing and editing grows progressively smaller until the final product is dealt with by only a handful of individuals. It was also discovered that different committee members brought different strengths to the operation. Being a smaller group it was easier to utilize group members in a productive manner.

To expand the circle of involvement review panels were set up in all four of the schools. Fifteen members were selected by the deans to serve on these panels. This really began the process of maximum participation by the faculty. It was the goal of the NCA Steering Committee to make as many individuals as possible aware of the document and at the same time give the faculty input into the process. In this way the Steering Committee worked toward fostering ownership of the final document by the faculty and the campus at large. The Steering Committee was extremely pleased by the results. The NCA Focused Visit Team confirmed the success of participation by commenting on the large percentage of individuals on campus who were aware of and had read the Self-Study Report and the issues contained within it.

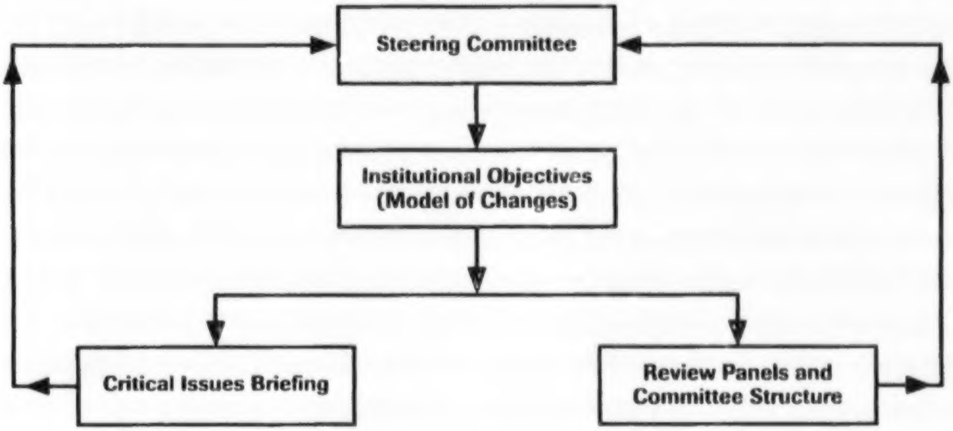
Preparing for a Commission-Mandated Focused Visit

The first thing that the Steering Committee had to do to begin preparing for the focused visit was go back and read the 1993 comprehensive team's final report. From this report the Steering Committee pulled out those issues that were of concern to the Team. In doing so the Committee realized that a model for change had to be conceptualized. More specifically, a model had to be defined to operationalize the concern of the previous team. In an effort to make the self-study process work the Steering Committee developed institutional objectives to help prepare for the focused visit. From these objectives the Steering Committee defined the outcomes that the institution would be able to demonstrate. These demonstrations would include patterns of evidence in policy and structural changes that needed to occur within the institution.

Much debate preceded the development of the model and the objectives themselves. Once the institutional objectives were defined, they became the guiding force for moving the self-study process along. It should be noted that the most difficult part of the whole self-study process was conceptualizing and operationalizing those issues and concerns. Once assessment, program review, and budgeting were clearly developed and framed in the model, the self-study process gained a great deal of clarity.

Strategies for Campus-Wide Involvement in the Self-Study Process

As has been previously stated membership on the Steering Committee was kept artificially low. Where the involvement was going to occur would be during the process and editing the document. The Steering Committee involved as many of the faculty as possible to develop awareness in a way that had never before been attempted in the self-study process. Review panels were set up. Committees on campus were utilized, especially University standing committees. The standing committees were asked to study issues and make recommendation, which were then incorporated into the Self-Study Report. The Faculty Senate was involved as one the Steering Committee members was the president of this entity. Faculty was drawn from many areas to have input and participate in the process (see figure 1).


Steering Committee
Institutional Objectives (Model of Changes)
Critical Issues Briefing
Review Panels and Committee Structure

It would not be truthful to say that all of this went smoothly and was accomplished without some resistance. Because of the culture that had been prevalent on this campus, many faculty at first did not believe or buy into the shared governance process. Even when they heard the words from the president, they were still skeptical. Committees initially tried to void the tasks given to them by the Steering Committee. They submitted reports that were inferior, lacked clarity and documentation to support their recommendations and conclusions. The Steering Committee had to remain persistent in returning the work to the committees with specific instructions on how to complete their task. This was met with shock and disbelief, and in some instances, embarrassment by committee chairs and members. Once this barrier of non-belief was breached, faculty and committees began a transition to take their assignments seriously as they realized that they were going to be relied on to develop a whole quality of work, and be significantly involved in the self-study process.

Keeping the Campus Informed about the Self-Study

It is difficult to say what was a bigger challenge: writing the Self-Study Report as a faculty for the first time, or keeping the campus informed about the self-study and focused visit. It has been hypothesized that many self-studies do not attempt to involve faculty until the end of the self-study process. The Steering Committee disagreed with this approach and believed that it would be ineffective in creating the ownership that was necessary in having an effective self-study process.

Review panels, critical issue briefings for both administrators and faculty, surveys, and integration of the existing committee structure were utilized in keeping all informed. What began to emerge was a broad and in depth understanding of the self-study process that was critical in gaining the trust and the awareness from the faculty for the self-study process. Overall, these efforts were effective in informing the campus community, and in creating the ownership of the self-study process that was sought by the Steering Committee.

Summary and Conclusion

The outcome of the Commission-mandated focused visit was very successful. The self-study document was praised by our Commission staff liaison and the evaluation team. Our efforts were rewarded with a positive report from the team. The team commented that faculty who were interviewed, both independently and in groups, had the requisite knowledge and understanding of the Self-Study Report. The overall outcome of this endeavor is that Southeastern Oklahoma State University has a participatory style of management in the decision making process. And today, one year after the visit, the University still has the commitment of the president and the adminstration to carry forth the initiatives that were begun with the self-study process three years ago.

References

Sergiovanni, T. J. 1999. *Educational governance and administration.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Charles S. Weiner is Associate Professor of Education at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma.

Douglas N. McMillan is Assistant Vice President for Academic Affiars at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma.

Using Faculty Liaisons and Poster Sessions to Increase Campus Involvement in Self-Study and Student Assessment Activities*

Edward Angus

While the admonition that the best programs for assessing student learning outcomes are faculty driven and controlled is generally true, gaining widespread faculty involvement in such programs does not automatically follow. Most likely, there is a college-wide faculty assessment committee charged with overseeing assessment activities, especially for institutional-wide endeavours such as general education or general college outcomes. Additionally, academic units have responsibility for assessing student learning outcomes in their respective programs or majors. How can the institution facilitate communication about, and broaden faculty involvement in and knowledge of, all these diverse activities? What follows are brief descriptions of a few relatively simple strategies that were successful at Fort Lewis College for increasing faculty involvement in the self-study and assessment of student learning processes.

Fort Lewis College is a regional, four-year, public liberal arts college located in Durango, Colorado, which is in the southwestern corner of the state. Student enrollment is approximately 4,400 and there are about 180 faculty divided into Schools of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, and Education.

In May 1996, NCA notified the college that it would, as a result of concerns identified in the March 1996 reaccreditation visit, have a focused visit on assessment of student learning outcomes during the 1997-98 academic year (this was later changed to 1998-99, and the actual visit occurred in March 1999). Consequently, early in the summer of 1996, the Vice President for Academic Affairs appointed a task force on assessment with a charge to develop a plan addressing NCA's concerns and to aid in preparing the college for the focused visit. During the summer months the task force discussed that charge as well as processes to address NCA's concerns. During the Fall term of 1996, the task force became a regular standing committee of the college with much the same charge as the task force. Its membership included representatives from each of the three schools of the college. The college's Office of Assessment, which had been functioning for nearly a decade collecting and analyzing data on student learning and reporting information based on those analyses to state authorities, etc., was also included on both the task force and faculty committee membership.

Because the college had a "cafeteria" type of general education program, one of the first tasks of the Assessment Committee was to decide what student learning outcomes to assess and how to assess them. Ironically, the reaccreditation team also criticized the college's general education program but did not include it in the recommendations resulting in a focused visit. However, the college created a task force to consider general education reform at the same time it addressed the need to develop and implement an effective assessment program. It was soon apparent, however, that general education reform was going to require a much longer timeframe than developing an assessment plan. Thus, the two task forces, which did have some overlapping membership to facilitate communication between the two groups, went their separate ways. The Assessment Committee, over the course of several months of discussions, developed a set of tentative goals to be assessed; then small teams of committee members met with every academic department, seeking comment on the proposed goals. At the conclusion of this process, the committee proposed four assessment goals to the college's faculty, which unanimously approved them.

Ed. Note: This paper discusses preparation for a focused evaluation on assessment of student academic achievement.

(The four goals are: Learning as Inquiry; Critical Thinking as Problem Solving; Communication as Intellectual Contribution; and Action as Application of Academic Learning.)

With four assessment goals approved, the Assessment Committee then faced the prospect of how to collect assessment data on both the college-wide level and at the academic major level in keeping with NCA's Criteria Three and Four for Accreditation. There were various data collections available (such as ACT COMP, Student Opinion and Alumni Surveys, GRE scores, etc.,)—some of these had been in place for nearly a decade—but there had been little faculty involvement in their collection nor interest in their dissemination. Departments had also been active to varying degrees in collecting and analyzing data on student learning, but other than the Office of Assessment few faculty outside any particular department knew what other departments were doing concerning assessment. In fact, much of this activity had been driven by external demands from state agencies such as annual accountability measures and periodic academic program (majors) reviews. So, how to widen participation in, and knowledge of, student learning assessment?

- The Assessment Committee, in October 1997, requested that each academic program/department chair designate a faculty member to serve as a liaison to the Assessment Committee. These liaisons were asked to serve both as a consistent point of contact and a communications link between the committee and their respective departmental faculty regarding college-wide assessment activities, especially those pertinent to the forthcoming focused visit. Further, each member of the Assessment Committee was assigned as the committee's liaison to a group of departmental liaisons.

- The Assessment Committee was aware that many of the liaisons were younger faculty, new to the college and not well acquainted with other departments' or college-wide assessment activities. This prompted the committee to begin, in the fall of 1997, a series of meetings and faculty development workshops focusing on topics such as fostering critical thinking and rating student work samples using the assessment rubric for the departmental liaisons. Several of these sessions were also opened, by special invitation from the Vice President, to faculty within their first three years at the college. Also, a series of "show case" presentations as they were called were held presenting a variety of models of good practice concerning assessment and/or different approaches to assessment and use of assessment results to modify curriculum. These sessions had several results. Liaisons (and other participants) became familiar with a variety of approaches to assessing student learning from various disciplines. They also became aware that there were a number of resources and individuals on campus beyond members of the Assessment Committee that they could turn to for assessment information.

- The Assessment Committee, recognizing that departmental assessment activities would be quite varied, established an annual reporting timeline for departments to provide the committee information on student learning outcomes. This was the committee's only attempt to impose standardization, and it only dealt with a department's reporting its assessment activities to the committee. Otherwise, departments had considerable leeway in developing their own learning outcomes goals and the processes by which to assess those goals as they related to student learning in the major or program.

  Basic elements of the annual cycle are:

  - Beginning in the winter term of 1998, departments initially established goals/outcomes to be assessed; established processes to collect relevant data; and began collecting such data by the end of the winter term.
  - Over the summer months, they analyze the data; discuss it as a unit; draft a report; share that report with departmental members.
  - By the end of October, submit the department's assessment report to the Assessment Committee.
  - By early February, the Assessment Committee reads the departmental reports; discusses and rates them using a rubric developed by the committee; and shares its collective comments and ratings with the department. Members of the Assessment Committee confer as necessary with their assigned departments about plans for the next year's assessment activities.
  - The cycle repeats itself.

  The Assessment Committee was thus able to receive information from the various departments on a regularized basis and to have adequate time to review that information and communicate back to the departments as they began a new cycle of assessment activities. Departments were requested, although not required, to indicate what their assessment data revealed about student achievement in any of the four college-wide assessment goals.

◇ As the date of the focused visit approached, the Assessment Committee sponsored a late Friday afternoon "poster session" immediately following the regular monthly college-wide faculty meeting. This was held in the hallways just outside the location of the faculty meeting. For this event, every department was asked to present information about their assessment processes, results, and curricular changes. Faculty from across the campus were thus able to view these presentations and ask questions of departmental representatives standing nearby their display. In a similar manner, there was a poster and information table reporting on the campus-wide assessment activities, copies of the just-released self-study, and information about the forthcoming NCA visitation.

In summary, the use of departmental liaisons proved quite useful in broadening the number of faculty engaged in assessing student learning beyond the typical individual classroom/instructional type of assessment. Through several fairly basic faculty development workshops for liaisons (and newer faculty), their knowledge of assessment techniques increased and lines of communication across disciplines and schools was enhanced. And the poster session just before the focused visit served to communicate a lot of information deemed important for faculty to know for the visit as well as affording them an opportunity to see the wide variety of assessment activities that were taking place across the campus in a format other than a lengthy oral or written report.

A Brief Critique

There was a concern that once the focused visit had occurred, departmental assessment activities would diminish. That has not happened, although the quality of the departmental reports was more varied this past fall than a year ago.

The timeline for departments to submit assessment reports to the Assessment Committee has been moved back one month (to the end of November). The committee surveyed the departments and it was clear that little work was done over the summer months, largely due to many faculty not being around, so additional time was required in the fall for drafting the report and getting appropriate departmental involvement.

The college's faculty has recently approved a complete revision of the general education program, consisting of four core courses to be taken during the junior-senior year and four pre-core courses, presumably to be taken in the freshman-sophomore years. The program is based on four areas of interdisciplinary knowledge or educational goals: systems and institutions, culture, the environment, and technology. While the goals for the general education program differ somewhat from the four assessment goals, they are similar. Nonetheless, the two sets of goals will need to be reconciled. One way of looking at the two sets of goals is that those selected for the assessment process might be termed "what students are able to do," while the general education outcomes characterized as "what students know."

A downside to the departmental liaisons and the persons who were assigned to write the departmental assessment reports (and they were often one and the same) was that many were the most junior members of the faculty. As a result, they were often unfamiliar with broader campus activities, other individuals outside their department, and student learning outcomes assessment, and more likely to have heavy teaching loads with new preparations. On the positive side, however, many brought a high level of energy to their assigned task, had fresh–indeed bold–insights, and often were ardent believers in (or converts to!) the basic value of assessment.

In the second year cycle, departments were requested to have departmental members complete a copy of the Assessment Committee's rubric evaluating the department's assessment report as a means of fostering greater faculty involvement in the departmental assessment process, as the committee had noted problems in this area while reviewing departments' assessment reports during the initial cycle.

Edward Angus is Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

QUEST FOR QUALITY
MISSION, THE COMMISSION AND A NEW CENTURY

Chapter 13

Seeking Initial Affiliation with the Commission

NCA

105th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
April 1–4, 2000 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

If We Had Known Then What We Know Now... A Retrospective on Candidacy by a Small Career College

Sarah M. Dennison
Tawnie L. Cortez

The integration of regional academic accreditation into a career/vocational college can be a daunting prospect. The challenge of achieving regional accreditation is in maintaining a strong tradition with a career-oriented mission while placing more emphasis on the five Criteria for Accreditation. This cognitive dissonance can be confusing at times; in our case it helped to propel the College forward.

In 1992, Rasmussen College began the first comprehensive self-study for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. We have completed three separate self-studies, each dramatically different from its predecessor, both in content and in focus. The College, comprised of four separate campus locations, elected to complete North Central Accreditation (NCA) as one institution with multiple sites. Thus began the quest for uniformity of process and in turn, the growth of Rasmussen College as a system. Candidacy was granted in 1994. In 2001, the College anticipates completion of the candidacy process and that accreditation will be granted.

Rasmussen College benefits from a long and accomplished history. The College was founded in 1900 as a private business college specializing in hands-on course work and long-term career placement. This tradition, combined with the College's continued quest for quality and improvement, provides for a strong position in an increasingly competitive market.

The climb has been arduous at times; we have reached a point high enough to allow us to look back and reflect on the candidacy experience. What follows is a list of soul-searching questions, the kind we wish we had asked ourselves at the beginning of the accreditation process:

- Maintaining our Mission–"Can we meet the five criteria without losing who we are?"
- The Governing Board–"Do I have to give up control over my business?"
- Faculty Governance–" Who has time to serve on a committee?"
- Integrating General Education–"Why do I have to offer Humanities?"

Our insights to each question are included. We offer our answers to these questions, having been through the process, as we know it; however, you may wish to ask these questions of yourself and your institution before reading through our answers.

Maintaining the Mission: "Can we meet the five criteria without losing who we are?"

◇ **Why are you seeking North Central Accreditation? What do you hope to gain?**

Our thoughts: In the beginning, our answer to this question would have been superficial at best. Transfer of credit was a general response. Rasmussen College had always excelled in our sector; we were shocked to find that in some respects we were out of our league.

Our advice: Check your ego at the door and be willing to learn. Face the fact that every piece of your organization will be analyzed and documented. Spend a great deal of time reading the criteria as groups and individuals. We would encourage representation from your administration, staff, and faculty at the North Central Association Annual Meeting. You will gain great insight to the accreditation process and have access to numerous self-studies. Feel free to call other schools that are in candidacy and gather advice. Devote professional development time to learning about the process–and do all of this before you decide to seek a regional accreditation.

To the question: "Why is Rasmussen College seeking NCA accreditation?" In the end, the answer to this question is the only one that matters. For us, it is the measuring stick against which other institutions of higher education are measured. And, we believe we are now strong enough and committed enough to withstand the scrutiny and even learn from it.

◇ **What do you do best? Not only in terms of the students you graduate, but also as a contributing member to your community, your educational sector, your marketplace?**

Our thoughts: Our commitment to students and the employers who hire our graduates remains a primary strength for the College. Our long–term presence in Minnesota confirms our commitment to higher education and a desire to maintain the cutting edge. We were the first two-year career college in Minnesota granted the authority to offer two-year degrees; we were the second college in Minnesota to implement a laptop computer program. We were at our best when we were willing to be adventurous and set the pace for others to follow. Accomplishing regional accreditation was one more opportunity to lead the way.

Our advice: Take your worst fears, multiply by three, and prepare to be surprised. Trust in the strengths of your institution and your employees. This is your opportunity to be honest about your institution's weaknesses. Be sure to draw on your strengths to overcome your weaknesses. Administrators, staff, and faculty will experience great professional growth. Individuals who have not had opportunities to contribute in the past will emerge as primary leaders for your institution.

◇ **What are you willing to sacrifice to accomplish regional accreditation?**

Our thoughts: The major sacrifice has been time...hours, minutes, days, weeks, decades. (We are living this millennium as though it's our last.) We found our time and energy devoted primarily to accreditation. While documenting each decision and procedure made us analyze our thoughts more fully, it also stymied our growth. We took the process as all or nothing, instead of streamlining and choosing a more balanced approach to candidacy.

Lastly, regional accreditation has been very costly. Both human and physical resources have been taxed to a greater extent than we thought possible. Instructional resources, learning resources, library resources, site visits, and additional staff all cost money.

Our advice: Realize that the amount you budget will be much less than what it will cost you in the end. This is not unlike remodeling the kitchen... It's best to remember that the allocation of resources, and the support of College administration to expend these resources, is critical to success.

The Governing Board: "Do I have to give up control over my business?"

We went directly to the source to obtain the answers to these questions. Outlined below are the thoughts of College ownership.

◇ **How do you overcome the fear of adding a governing board?**

Our thoughts: The U.S. Constitution grants an individual the right to control his/her personal property. A school, whether owned by an organization, an individual, or a group of people is, in fact, personal property. The thought of giving up control over this property was extremely frightening. It does not have to be. First, it is important to know that a Board of Directors must be independent of ownership and therefore able to make decisions in the best interest of the College. Your locus of control will shift. Responsibilities can be shared. The business of education does go on supported by a board with a legal authority to govern the College.

Our advice: Find board members who you trust and who believe in the mission of the institution. Prepare guidelines and bylaws for the Board. A Board Handbook is very helpful.

◇ **Where will you find your members? What kinds of people will be you looking for?**

Our thoughts: The Rasmussen College Board of Directors is diverse in terms of both gender and region (representing both the metropolitan area and out-state Minnesota). It is comprised of a health care administrator, a State Commissioner, one attorney, two CPAs, a real estate developer, and a former school owner. Three Rasmussen College stockholders join them. This variety lends itself well to active decision making.

Our advice: It's really important to have a wise Board. Seek knowledgeable individuals who will benefit the College as well as respect the needs of the stockholders. When the last vacancy on the Board occurred, the College solicited input from its employees to build a competent pool of applicants.

◇ **How will you structure a governing board?**

Our thoughts: The corporate charter provides the Rasmussen College governing board with the legal authority to govern the College. Governing Board bylaws and a Board Handbook provide for both the structure of the board and their operating procedures. Should the Board encounter a situation whereby one of the members has a conflict of interest, the bylaws require that individual to abstain from voting. The President of the College was elected by and reports to the Board of Directors.

Our advice: You may want to collect information from other colleges that are forming governing boards. In the end, be sure to develop a Board that will define and defend the best interests of the College.

◇ **How will the board maintain autonomy from the institution—and an ability to make decisions?**

Our thoughts: Maintaining autonomy is a challenge. Every College wants board members who believe in and support the institution. Each one needs to want and vote for what is best for the College and its constituents.

Our advice: As the Board becomes established and its members become more familiar with the organization, decision making may become labored. Remember that Board members are also learning. If you have selected members well, you will be delighted with the help they provide and the resources you now have at your fingertips.

◇ **How will you maintain board involvement with the accreditation process?**

Our thoughts: Board members receive accreditation updates on a quarterly basis. Some serve on self-study committees and each is well acquainted with the self-study process.

Our advice: Provide the same degree of professional development to your Board as you do to all the College employees. If you have not yet applied for candidacy, or are in your initial self-study, your Board should be heavily involved in researching regional accreditation. They will need to approve your desire to seek candidacy and to provide guidance as you begin initial self-studies.

Faculty Governance: Who has time to serve on a committee?

◇ **If you ask faculty members how they want to be involved in governance, what will they say?**

Our thoughts: Initially, faculty and staff were very excited about participating, but when committee meetings absorbed entire days, we all had second thoughts. There was a conflict between the desire to be involved and the realities of governance: it is time consuming, and requires working with larger groups and the ability to reach consensus.

Our advice: Enjoy the process of governance, make use of the process, but put an end to it as well. For each process, there should ultimately be a product. At the end of the day, you should feel good about both what you have done—and how you have done it.

◇ **How are faculty/staff involved in the accreditation process?**

Our thoughts: Every staff and faculty member, from the front office through the faculty is involved in the accreditation process at Rasmussen College. Each of them serves a self-study committee and participates in the writing of criterion reports. This broad-based approach has been the strength of our self-study.

Our advice: Notice that we say faculty **and** staff. The full participation of our staff has been critical to our success. In the first self-study, our focus was entirely around faculty. We missed a significant pool of experience and strength. Once our staff was fully involved, our faculty and administration were able to implement the recommendations of our self-studies.

◇ **How are faculty/staff involved/accountable for the development of curricula, institutional goals, budgeting, institutional planning?**

Our thoughts: The Rasmussen College committee structure is complicated, but it ensures that each member of our community is involved in decision making. Committee chairs report to a respective administrative group, which either approves, rejects, or requests additional research on each proposal. Once approved, it is returned to the committee to determine implementation. In this way, the success or failure of any action plan really rests with the people who came up with the idea in the first place. Goals and objectives created by the committees become part of the strategic plan, and the budget. Because the College is multi-sited, the governance issue was our biggest challenge, and has become one of our best accomplishments.

Our advice: From top to bottom, everyone should be engaged and accountable. Develop an integrated committee structure that involves all the members of your community. Accept that decision making may become cumbersome, but long term you will gain a nearly universal commitment to the institution and its mission.

General Education: Why do we have to offer Humanities?

◇ **What is the purpose of general education?**

Our thoughts: Initially, general education courses tended to be little more than mandated degree requirements. There was a tendency to see general education as a distraction from the process of preparing students for the workforce—highly abstract, removed from daily concerns, and time consuming with little practical return. Now we frame general education as the first component of the phrase "Education for Living and for Making a Living." We believe that general education in the form of critical thinking skills as well as substantive information prepares students as consumers, business-persons, and citizens.

Our advice: You should make sure that your general education program meets the same standards of practicality as any other program: it must serve students as they enter the workforce and its goals must be clear and accessible to employers and students alike without diluting either rigor or the essential goal of broadening students' world-views. If general education serves you in this way, the standards for rigor will come naturally to your institution in all its programs.

◇ **How do general education faculty assist, coexist with career faculty?**

Our thoughts: At first, we didn't even see the point to this question as we didn't really see the need for specialized general education faculty. We had enough faith in our career faculty and their ability to integrate general education into their courses that we relied almost entirely on adjunct faculty for the specifically general education courses. It was only after our second self-study that we really began to understand the role of general education in our institution. So for us the issue was less how do we coexist and more why should we have specialized faculty. We have since hired full-time general education faculty, and as a whole we've not had the conflicts that are generally expected. And the benefits have been fully what we anticipated.

Our advice: Fear not general education faculty, but do take care in who you hire. The needs of a career college are particular. However, you can find and will find qualified faculty who are dedicated to the mission of your institution.

◇ **How does general education contribute to all programs—certificate, diploma, and degree?**

Our thoughts: When we began to see that our students truly benefited from their general education courses, we also realized that certificate and diploma students deserved equally as much in the way of critical thinking skills and broadened horizons. At that point, like so many other institutions, we understood the import and difficulty of integrating general education in all of our programs. We began with rewriting course objectives to include higher level intellectual skills, but we know that we still have much more to do to ensure full integration. The most important step we took in this part of the process was creating full-time general education faculty positions. We fully expect these people to spearhead the ongoing process of integration.

Our advice: Know that general education cannot be isolated from the rest of your institution—and you don't want it to be. General education can enhance every aspect of your program if you allow it to. When you ask your entire faculty to consider the skills and knowledge base their students need, they will find that general education is indeed an asset. On the other hand, it also has to be clear that general education for its own sake misses the point as well. There really needs to be a concert of efforts in the educational enterprise in order for students to succeed in the long run.

◇ **How would you describe the "presence" of general education on your campus?**

Our thoughts: Once we stopped thinking of general education as a distraction or as only marginally relevant to our mission, we understood that merely offering general education classes was not enough. At that point, we had to decide what presence really meant. For us, it was a matter of institutionally committing resources to general education in the form of library facilities, librarians, and full-time faculty in general education. But it means more than that as well: we have also extended general education to career programs, we committed resources to ensuring that all of our students are literate and numerate at a college level, and we have extended general education into the student culture. We have begun to find ways to encourage students to participate in the cultural opportunities of their own communities, ranging from art and theatre to ethnic events and community service. For us, presence is slowly coming to mean more than just being present on campus, it means being everywhere.

Our advice: Avoid the temptation to cast general education as just another accreditation requirement. And have fun with it. If general education opens your students' minds, think of what it should be doing for faculty, staff, and administration. General education, if it serves its purpose, should enhance your institution. But be prepared for change. Once you open this door, your programs will all change and that will take a lot of work. It's worth it in the long run: it'll make you more competitive by opening new possibilities for your students through expanded programs.

◇ **How do you assess the outcomes of general education?**

Our thoughts: This is one of the most difficult questions, for if general education is truly integrated throughout all your programs, assessment of general education requires that assessment in all programs. Any institution that claims to have solved this problem is either kidding or has been at it a lot longer than anyone else. The biggest problem with assessment of general education is one of finding the right tools for doing it and the resources—human and fiscal—to support the process. We've found some solutions and in doing so found other problems.

Our advice: Start thinking about this now—and never stop thinking about it. Assessment, in all programs, is here to stay. But it's important to remember that assessment should serve your mission, not undermine it. Any program that you develop should look to evaluate and have a mechanism for institutional change based on the outcome of that evaluation. If you can't get to the "how do we do this better" part, you need to rethink assessment.

The Final Question: "Knowing what you know now, would you choose to pursue regional accreditation again?"

Our thoughts: Today, in the winter of 2000, knowing that initial accreditation is right around the corner—absolutely—we would do it again. Supported by the realization that the 1999 evaluation team has determined that Rasmussen College has met all five criteria, and buoyed by the Commission's concurrence with their findings, we look forward to our next self-study. There have been times when the candidacy phase has seemed cloaked in mystery: the vocabulary is new and expectations are high. We have evolved from trying to determine "what NCA wants" to discovering that we control our own destiny. In the end, self-study really is about self-improvement and candidacy is about climbing the mountain one plateau at a time. We have emerged as a stronger College with better organizational structures and a powerful administration, staff, and faculty who are well equipped to take on the new century.

Sarah M. Dennison is Chief Academic Officer at Rasmussen College in Eagan, Minnesota.

** *Tawnie L. Cortez is Campus Director at Rasmussen College in Eagan, Minnesota.*

Initial Affiliation... Candidate Style

Vickie L. Donnell
R. Elaine Crabtree

This paper is presented for those institutions considering or preparing for initial affiliation with the North Central Association (NCA) and describes the processes undertaken by the Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences as it pursued affiliation as a candidate institution. The companion paper, "From Candidacy to Accreditation," that follows contrasts the College's self-study processes for candidacy and initial accreditation.

Overview of the Institution

Founded upon a proud, nearly one hundred year, tradition in diploma nursing education, Cox College was established in 1994 as a private, single-purpose institution of higher learning dedicated to excellence in health care education. Cox College currently offers the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees. In Fall 1999 the College initiated its first health science program, offering a certificate in Medical Transcription. The enrollment of Cox College is approximately 270 students.

From earliest planning, membership in the NCA has been the ultimate goal for Cox College. The Preliminary Information Form was submitted in Fall 1995 and in the summer of 1996 the college received permission to proceed with the self-study process. In October 1997 an evaluation team visited the campus. The visit resulted in recommendation of candidacy status by the Review Committee and the Commission granted candidacy in February 1998.

During 1998-99 self-study continued with efforts now focused on achieving initial accreditation. In October 1999, exactly two years after the team visit for candidacy status, Cox College hosted a team whose recommendation was the granting of initial accreditation. At this writing the College awaits Review Committee and Commission action. (Ed. note: Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences was granted initial accreditation effective February 2, 2000.)

The Pursuit of Candidacy

☐ **Phase 1..."Will this really happen in our lifetime?"...The Preliminary Information Form (PIF)**

◇ **Fall 1995 (two years prior to the team visit): PIF submitted**

The most important thing to know about the PIF is that the term *form* is somewhat misleading. Just accept the fact that this will be the first of many documents you will submit in your quest for accreditation. The purpose of the PIF is to provide evidence that the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) are met to a degree sufficient to justify a team visit. Thus, it is crucial that each of the GIRs be addressed explicitly.

The importance of the period of time prior to and immediately following submission of the PIF cannot be minimized. In fact, the energy expended at Cox College during this initial phase was probably greater than for either of the two subsequent self-study processes. To sufficiently address the GIRs, details regarding the institution's authorization, governance, faculty, finances, and facilities must be in order—a monumental task for any institution, no matter its mission, longevity, or size.

While the PIF was submitted in October, it is worthwhile to note that a response was not received until March of the following year. In that response, a request was made for the college to submit supplemental information in regard to three GIRs.

◇ Spring 1996: Structure and processes for self-study defined

One of the most important decisions made regarding accreditation processes is the appointment of the individual(s) who will coordinate the self-study. In addition to unlimited physical and mental energy and organizational skills, important qualities include:

- knowledge of the institution's history and a clear understanding of its vision;
- enthusiasm for the ongoing compliance tasks as well as the processes of self-study;
- positive working relationships with all constituents at all levels of the institution; and
- the ability to address sensitive and difficult issues in a positive manner.

To ensure an efficient, as well as effective, self-study process, careful consideration must be given to how the self-study will be accomplished. Structure and process options are as unique as each institution. At Cox College decisions regarding such issues as the goals of the self-study, timeline, and committee structure were made by the Administrative Council, an institutional body that has administrator, faculty, and student representation. Involvement of the entire college community in the earliest stages of planning is critical not only to ensure an informed campus, but also to foster support for the self-study and the extensive work that it will require.

At Cox College the committee structure included:

- a **Steering Committee,** responsible for developing and administering policies and procedures for the process, directing the process, and ultimately responsible for compilation of all efforts into a meaningful, coherent report that accurately reflects the study's findings;
- three **Principal Committees,** responsible for examining all aspects of the institution in light of the College's mission and purposes to the extent required by the specific assigned criterion(criteria); and
- an **Action Committee,** which at the conclusion of the self-study assured follow-up to actions called for within the Self-Study Report.

◇ Summer 1996: Approval to proceed with self-study received
Committee members appointed
Plan for Self-Study for Candidacy Status submitted

Throughout the accreditation process Cox College has taken the opportunity to celebrate even the smallest accomplishments. Notification of approval to proceed with self-study was one of those occasions. The quick response received in regard to the supplemental information was certainly welcome. Everyone was ready to get on with the process since by this time it had been more than nine months since submission of the original PIF.

The President appointed the Steering Committee with the remaining appointments made by the Administrative Council. Membership on the Principal Committees was arranged to provide broad participation and included trustees, administrators, general education and nursing faculty members, students, and members of the staff. It is important that consideration be given to individuals' responsibilities within the institution to ensure that persons responsible for implementing specific campus activities are not solely responsible for the evaluation of the activity.

Immediately following appointment, the Self-Study Coordinator had begun preparation of the *Plan for Self-Study for Candidacy Status.* In fact, when notification to proceed with self-study was received, the only aspects of the document not complete were the target dates on the timeline. The College welcomed the opportunity to "fire back" the Plan to our assigned staff liaison. As work progressed, some modifications were made in the Plan, but the prescriptive plan provided the structure necessary to ensure an efficient and effective self-study.

☐ **Phase 2..."We've got permission to proceed, now where do we go?...Organization of the Self-Study**

◇ **Fall 1996 (one year prior to team visit): Principal committees organize and submit outline of Report**
Staff liaison visits campus for college-wide forum

Committee members were informed by mail of their appointments over the summer. Thus, the return of faculty in the Fall heralded the beginning of an intense period of preparation. Each of the Principal Committees chose a chairperson and recorder and established its own structure (e.g., use of subcommittees). While guidelines for the writing of the final committee reports were included in the *Plan for Self-Study for Candidacy Status*, committees were encouraged to be unique in their reports with priority given to thoroughness of study and forthrightness in reporting findings.

To facilitate the initial work of the committees, the Steering Committee compiled a list of suggested patterns of evidence that were likely to emerge as each committee delved into its assigned criterion(criteria). Using this as a guide, each committee submitted a proposed outline of its report. Even though at this point the work of the committees was in the earliest stages, the early initial deadline hastened committee productivity.

It was during this period that Cox College advanced a great deal in its development as an institution of higher education. The event that significantly contributed to this growth was a one-day forum led by the College's NCA Staff Liaison. The session, which was attended by trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff, proved to be invaluable as the role of the NCA and its accreditation processes were clarified. The result was a college community more clear in its understanding of the scope of self-study and energized to complete the work that was now well underway.

☐ **Phase 3..."We know who we are. Why do we need to do all this?"...Collection and Analysis of Data**

◇ **Spring 1997: Principal Committee chairpersons and Steering Committee collaborate on data collection**

Principal Committees submit preliminary, final report drafts, and final reports

Principal Committees present findings in faculty forum

As an institution undertakes self-study, it should never underestimate or devalue the wealth of ongoing data already available (e.g., minutes, committee reports, contracts, program proposals, documents prepared for other agencies, etc.). No doubt there will be critical information missing that will be targeted as data collection methods are planned. Campus-wide organization of data collection will assure thoroughness of study while preventing duplication of efforts, which has potential to progress to survey exhaustion and campus apathy.

At Cox College the Principal Committee chairpersons identified the information needed to address their assigned criterion(criteria) and the Steering Committee was responsible for the details of data collection (e.g., instrument development, convening focus groups, and coding and entry of data, etc.). It is at this point in the process that personal agendas or the "we vs. they" syndrome may appear and decisions regarding data collection are often not arrived at easily. To assure a credible study, no subject/issue should be considered "off-limits." The challenge is to assure objectivity in the data available to analyze the situation. Thus, careful attention must be given to such tasks as development of surveys, defining the composition of focus groups, and wording of focus group questions.

The months of March, April, and May were extremely busy and, as in all institutions where *deadline* is the word heard most frequently at the copy machine, the term "stress-filled environment" took on new meaning. As the timeline is planned it is important to consider that, in addition to all that is required for self-study, the routine tasks, teaching responsibilities, and new and unanticipated projects continue. **Expect the time you've allowed for each phase of the study to be insufficient...**

Printed guidelines were available to guide preparation of the Principal Committee reports. The body of each report addressed content areas appropriate to the specific criterion(criteria), described methodologies used for data collection, provided relevant data, and summarized the major findings. In addition, each committee was asked to develop a plan of action that included recommendations to address serious deficiencies and suggestions that would contribute to overall improvement of the College and its programs.

As the work of the Principal Committees progressed, findings were shared at monthly meetings of the Faculty Assembly. Several weeks prior to the final submission date, a college-wide forum was held to discuss the identified deficiencies, recommendations, and suggestions. As would be expected this generated much discussion, and in some instances resulted in editing. While ongoing communication–by every method imaginable–is a necessity in self-study, the sharing that occurred at the forum was extremely important to the Steering Committee, which was about to begin the task of compiling the efforts of the Principal Committees into a meaningful, coherent Self-Study Report. **Communicate, communicate, and communicate**...

☐ **Phase 4..."Will this ever come together into a meaningful, coherent report?"...Preparation of the Self-Study Report**

◇ **Summer 1997: Self-Study Report developed**
Third party comments requested

The Steering Committee held a final meeting prior to the summer break to finalize plans for the Self-Study Report. Following review of the Principal Committee Reports, strengths, challenges, and activities toward achievement of each criterion were drafted. It is noteworthy that the conclusions to be drawn from the Self-Study Report (strengths, challenges, and activities) differed from those requested of the Principal Committees (recommendations and suggestions). Because of the nature of the criteria, there were aspects of the College addressed by more than one Principal Committee with variation in the findings. The different approach to conclusions allowed for the specific critique of each committee, without constraining the Steering Committee's freedom to capture the full scope of the institution in the Self-Study Report.

At Cox College the Self-Study Coordinator drafted the Self-Study Report and the Steering Committee was responsible for review and content editing. From the beginning of self-study, it is important to remember that the Self-Study Report is incidental to the self-study process. These terms must be distinguished early and used correctly in conversation–the Steering Committee will be instrumental in this important piece. There have been an abundance of papers written on the details of preparing the final document. In fact, the companion paper appearing in this chapter provides additional information regarding preparation of the reports of Cox College. **Be attentive to the smallest detail, forthright, and positive**...

As the Self-Study Report chapters were drafted they were made available to all members of the Steering and Principal Committees with a request for comments related to fact. The comments received at this juncture were minimal. However, this late opportunity for campus-wide input was seen as crucial to support of the conclusions drawn in the final document. Likewise, the strengths, challenges, and planned activities were presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval. **Achieve support and avoid surprises**...

☐ **Phase 5..."Everything is ready. All we have left to do is show off Cox College."...The Team Visit**

◇ **Fall 1997 (semester of the team visit): Resource room organized**
Team visited

When the final documents were in the mail to the evaluation team, attention turned to preparation of the Resource Room. Again, there have been numerous lists published of suggested Resource Room holdings and the companion paper has more specific information. **Be organized, accommodating, and if in doubt–include it**...

By now, the dates of the team visit have been circled on everyone's calendar for months and it is a relief as the visit draws near. However, the need to attend to the slightest of details continues. The amount of energy put into preparation for the visit will be in direct proportion to what is gained from it. First, take advantage of the campus-wide energy that builds prior to the visit; harness it to "get your house in order." Second, have as much input into planning the agenda as possible. Even though the team chair will direct what occurs during the visit and request functions and meetings with specific groups, don't underestimate what your institution can gain from consultation.

Next, assure an informed college community since an informed community is one well prepared for the visit. Measures taken at Cox College to increase familiarity with the self-study findings included: scheduled reading sessions, classroom visits by the Self-Study Coordinator and President, distribution of flyers, and summaries in the campus newsletter, Campus Chatter. Preparation of an Executive Summary of the Report facilitated dissemination of the conclusions drawn from the self-study. Finally, the word on campus as the day of the visit arrived–**Be honest and be positive.**

☐ **Phase 6…"It's all over but the celebrating."…Review Committee and Commission Action**

◇ **Spring 1998: Review Committee meeting held**
Candidacy for Accreditation granted

There is no question that the highlight of the self-study process is the team visit, and the experience was a totally positive one for Cox College. Affirmed in its accomplishments, college efforts toward initial accreditation were well underway when the actions of the Review Committee and the Commission were formally announced.

Vickie L. Donnell is Director of the Associate of Science in Nursing degree program at Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Springfield, Missouri.

R. Elaine Crabtree is President at Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Springfield, Missouri.

From Candidacy to Accreditation

Vickie L. Donnell
R. Elaine Crabtree

This paper is written for those institutions preparing for initial accreditation with the North Central Association (NCA) and describes the processes undertaken by the Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences as it progressed through its candidacy period to initial accreditation. This paper is a continuation of "Initial Affiliation... Candidate Style," a paper that appears earlier in this chapter. This paper describes Cox College's pursuit of initial accreditation and compares the processes undertaken for candidacy, which are described in the previous paper, and those for accreditation. Readers are referred to the companion paper for an overview of the institution.

It is the choice of the institution whether to seek candidate status initially or to progress directly to member status through initial accreditation. Even though Cox College evolved from the nearly 100 year tradition of a well-established, diploma-granting institution, consideration was never given to bypassing the candidacy program. The candidacy period proved invaluable as Cox College matured and evolved into an institution of higher education.

Cox College began the candidacy period challenged by the work that was to be done, but affirmed in its progress. There were nine concerns identified by the candidacy visit evaluation team, but with the 11 recognized strengths it was obvious that Cox College was well on its way to fulfilling the Criteria for Accreditation. In its Final Report the team stated that accreditation within four years was a certainty. However, there was never a doubt, from the College's perspective, that accreditation would be accomplished in two years.

The Challenges

The challenges facing Cox College were broad in scope, including such aspects as:

- ○ bringing focus to the Mission Statement and precision to the institutional purposes;
- ○ defining corporate, governance, and administrative relationships;
- ○ enhancing the application and support of computer technology;
- ○ defining a cohesive planning model; and
- ○ refining the plan to assess student academic achievement.

Without question the work required to accomplish the challenges was enough to keep everyone busy for the upcoming two-year period. However, the realization was that amid the challenges and ongoing compliance tasks, the work of self-study had to continue. At Cox College the momentum was never lost as the College began to focus attention on the C-E team's concerns immediately upon receipt of their report. Even though the rigor of the previous self-study process remained fresh in everyone's minds, Cox College embarked on its pursuit for accreditation with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

The Pursuit of Accreditation...How it Differed from Candidacy

☐ Phase 1..."If it isn't broke don't fix it."...Structure and Processes of the Self-Study Defined

No Preliminary Information Form to worry about this time–just get on with it! At Cox College there were only a few things changed in regard to organization of the self-study. The President chose to appoint co-coordinators to undertake the study for initial accreditation. Coordinating a self-study is a huge task and with release time not an

Self-Study for Candidacy	Self-Study for Initial Accreditation
1 Self-Study Coordinator	**2 Self-Study Coordinators**
Steering Committee • self-study coordinator • President • BSN Program Director • Director of Student Services • 3 nursing faculty • 1 general education faculty • 1 trustee	**Steering Committee** • self-study co-coordinators • President • BSN Program Director • Director of Student Services • 1 nursing faculty • 1 general education faculty • 1 trustee
3 Principal Committees • Administrative Processes Committee Criteria One, Four, and Five • Educational Support Committee Criterion Two • Educational Program Committee Criterion Three	**4 Principal Committees** • Administrative Processes Committee Criteria One and Five • Educational Support Committee Criterion Two • Educational Program Committee Criterion Three • Educational Effectiveness Committee Criterion Four

option for those in leadership roles, this arrangement proved beneficial for a number of reasons—not the least of which was a shared responsibility for getting the job done. Since there had been significant expansion in the College's assessment, decision-making, and planning processes there was a committee appointed specifically to address Criterion Four. Also, membership of the Steering Committee was reduced.

Cox College was fortunate in that most involved in the candidacy study were still around for the accreditation study. As much as possible, Principal Committee chairpersons continued to serve and trustees, faculty, and staff remained on the same committees. Of course, student appointments changed, with students continuing to be actively involved in the work of the committees.

The *Plan for Self-Study* developed for the candidacy study had served the College well, and only minimal revisions were required to make it applicable for the accreditation visit. Don't minimize the importance of this, yet another, document. The time spent in its preparation will be well worth it. One other word of advice—if you had a Fall visit for candidacy, try to have a Fall initial accreditation visit. Everyone's clock is already set!

Things to remember:

- ○ Start early, set deadlines, and stick to them.
- ○ Appoint Steering Committee members who have the ability to see the "big picture."
- ○ Get to know your NCA Staff Liaison and make sure s/he gets to know you and your institution.

☐ Phase 2..."It is so much easier this time around"...Self-Study Organized

Organizing the study was painless the second time around. The committees knew where they were going and pending deadlines had become the campus norm. Even though the Principal Committees were encouraged in the original study to focus their work on content rather than style, there was significant time spent on formatting the candidacy reports. Fortunately, this was notably decreased in preparation of the reports for accreditation.

☐ Phase 3..."If it worked before, use it again"...Collection and Analysis of Data

In addition to the ongoing data required by the College's Plan for Institutional Evaluation (e.g., graduate surveys, employer surveys, etc.), surveys and focus groups were utilized to gather data specifically for self-study. Principal

Self-Study for Candidacy	Self-Study for Initial Accreditation
Data Collection Methods • Board of Trustees Survey • Nursing Faculty Survey • General Education and Nursing Facility Survey • Administrative and Academic Support Personnel Survey • Student Demographic Survey • Student Survey • Physical Resources Survey • 3 Student Focus Groups	**Data Collection Methods** • Board of Trustees Survey • Faculty Survey • Academic Support Personnel Survey • Student Demographic Survey • Student Survey • Physical Resources Survey • 3 Student Focus Groups • 2 Graduate Focus Groups

Committee chairpersons were again instrumental in identifying the data necessary for study of their assigned criteria and, in the accreditation study, the chairs conducted the student and graduate focus groups.

The time and energy required for this phase during the accreditation study were significantly less. While there were some survey and focus group questions that needed to be edited and some aspects of the college for which items needed to be developed, the instruments were changed as little as possible. This provided a longitudinal perspective and contributed significantly to the breadth of the accreditation study.

☐ Phase 4…"And you thought your first one looked good."…Preparation of the Self-Study Report

Both of Cox College's Self-Study Reports consisted of three volumes: the Report, the appendices, and a portfolio that contained accompanying documents. To prevent the boredom of just another document, and more

Self-Study for Candidacy	Self-Study for Initial Accreditation
Chapter Contents • Introduction • General Institutional Requirements • Criterion One • Criterion Two • Criterion Three • Criterion Four • Criterion Five • Conclusion Request for Initial Candidacy • References **Report Characteristics** • Focus is the General Institution Requirements (GIRs) • Develops an action plan toward achievement of Criteria for Accreditation • 12-point font / 1½ space • Retained an editor • Draft chapters available in hard-copy for campus review	**Chapter Contents** • Introduction • General Institutional Requirements • Response to 1997 C-E Team Report • Criterion One • Criterion Two • Criterion Three • Criterion Four • Criterion Five • Conclusion Request for Initial Accreditation • Federal Compliance • References **Report Characteristics** • Focus is the Criteria for Accreditation • Develops an action plan toward institutional improvement • 14-point font / 1½ space • Increased white space • Steering Committee did all editing • Draft chapters available on college computer network for campus review

importantly, to instill the message that the institution had progressed in its growth as an institution of higher education, an effort was made to put a totally new look on the accreditation document. (A word of advice–while some descriptive narrative from your candidacy report may be appropriate for the accreditation document, don't plan to use much of the candidacy report verbiage. You will find that the institution has matured to such a degree that it just no longer "fits.")

Communicating progress in the study and assuring that the college community is well-informed regarding the report's findings is no less important at the accreditation stage–you'll just find yourself much more relaxed about it. At Cox College, the publicity efforts seemed almost routine. Faculty access to the college computer network provided for convenient dissemination of chapter drafts and facilitated faculty and staff feedback. If you don't believe we were more relaxed about it–in preparation for the candidacy visit there were scheduled reading sessions and prior to the accreditation visit, to familiarize the faculty and staff with the Report's content, we played games!

Things to Remember:

- ○ As you begin your work, start a log of ideas that enter your mind (no matter how fleeting) that will need to be addressed. This list will go beyond the report itself to include Resource Room holdings, details of the visit, etc.
- ○ Look at every Self-Study Report you can lay your eyes on.
- ○ Forthrightness is a necessity–don't avoid sensitive issues.
- ○ As you draw conclusions, ask yourself
    - does this reflect an institution of higher education?
    - does this fulfill the mission and purposes?
    - could this be better?
- ○ Presentation is critical–sacrifice somewhere else if the budget is tight.
- ○ Make sure all committee members and members of the governing body receive a personal copy of the report–they deserve it for their hard work and it implies they are expected to know the contents.
- ○ Preparation of an Executive Summary is crucial to campus and community dissemination of the study's findings–be generous with them.
- ○ Start on the Basic Institutional Data Forms (BIDs) early and make sure numbers are congruent with the narrative of the report.
- ○ Print twice as many documents as you think you will need.

☐ Phase 5..."Don't plan on things being the same."...The Team Visit

The team chair is responsible for planning the visit; however, don't assume your visits will be similar. At Cox College, as may be true of all visits when initial accreditation is being considered, the nature of the accreditation visit was quite different, with the team much more prescriptive in development of the agenda.

The Resource Room prepared for the accreditation visit was almost identical in organization to the one prepared for the earlier visit. Obviously, the two-year interim yielded significantly more documents for inclusion, but the system of cataloging according to the Criteria for Accreditation had proven quite effective. At Cox College the location chosen as the Resource Room was large enough to accommodate a reading area and a work area. Plan this aspect of your visit to assure comfort and productivity. Be prepared to provide the necessary computer equipment. By the time the accreditation visit rolled around laptops seemed to have become standard equipment for consultant-evaluators. Printing capabilities were a necessity.

Cox College entered this phase confident that the accreditation criteria were met. When the team announced its recommendation of initial accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in five years, the applause that broke out among the nearly 200 gathered for the exit presentation told the story–**and we celebrated again!**

Things to remember.

- ○ The *Handbook of Accreditation* says the team chair should make the initial contact–is there anything wrong with a courtesy call to introduce yourself and offer assistance?
- ○ Confirm the agenda as much as possible before the team's arrival and verify it at the start of each day–keep participants informed.
- ○ Assure that overnight accommodations are nice, but not extravagant. An adjacent conference area is ideal and a fruit basket doesn't hurt anything.
- ○ Stay out of the way–Self-Study Coordinator(s) are not a top priority for conversation. You will have a formal opportunity to meet with the evaluators, but your primary role during the visit will be trouble-shooting.
- ○ Have a designated "communication center" on campus.
- ○ Expect the unexpected–be flexible.
- ○ Tell students and faculty to expect visitors in the classroom.
- ○ Encourage students to engage in candid conversation with team members–it is key to your success.
- ○ Remind everyone involved in the visit–Be Honest and Be Positive.

☐ **Phase 6…"Plan the party!"…Review Committee and Commission Action**

At this writing Cox College is doing just that–planning the party. Review Committee action is 10 days and counting; Commission action 42 days and counting. (Ed. note: Lester L. Cox College was granted initial accreditation effective February 2, 2000.)

Vickie L. Donnell is Director of the Associate of Science in Nursing degree program at Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Springfield, Missouri.

R. Elaine Crabtree is President at Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Springfield, Missouri.

Index of Speakers

Allen, Linda 141
Angus, Edward 399
Augustine, Catherine 15
Baker, James 295
Baker, Richard 123
Bass Howard G. Sam 244
Bazile, Mary Ann 223
Beaudoin, Diana Brigham 152
Beere Carole 266
Bennett, Marguerite M. 388
Berry, David A. 3
Bers, Trudy 212
Bigbee, Gale 368
Birkholz, John R. 80
Bishop, Jane 35
Boelhower, Gary J. 76
Bos, Linda Marie 152
Brewer, Jerrilyn 35
Brewer, Patricia 25
Bridgforth, Beth J. 374
Brown, Karla 238
Browne, Laura D. 349
Burgart, Rebecca J. 333
Byington Linda L. 280
Byron, Jennifer 280
Cartwright, Debra K. 103
Celaya, Larry 206
Cheek, William 295
Clarke, James 361
Clawson, Kay L. 392
Claybrook, Beverly 164
Collins, Kenneth 244
Colman, James P. 98
Cortez, Tawnie L. 405
Cosgrove, John 123
Crabtree, R. Elaine 411, 416
Da Ros, Denise 251
Dallinger, Judith 209
Davis, B. Diane 212
Dennison, Sarah M. 405
Dohman, Gloria 44
Donnell, Vickie L. 411, 416
Dowe, Ronald R. 118
Dudycha, Art 94
Eder, Douglas 186
Elias, Janice 251
Elwell, Mimi 329
Enger, Rolf C. 108, 313
Erickson, Anne Marie 85, 361
Evans, James D. 59
Evans, Karen 284
Fiscella, Joan B. 193
Flint, Thomas 22
Francis, Bruce 175
Frankland, Ann 317
Franklin, Timothy V. 289
Frantz, Steve 85
Frey, Ruth 22
Geesaman, Janis 217
Gilmore, Hattie 284
Green, Cindy 349
Gregg, Larry 284
Halpin, John A. 71
Hamilton, Sharon 29
Harrington, Charles F. 356
Hatfield, Susan Rickey 159
Haven, Jan 374
Hedlund, Helene 48
Helminski, Laura 206
Henrickson, Gary 44
Herriott, Scott R. 271
Hillesheim Gwen 266
Huba, Mary E. 114
Hughes, Cheryl 304
Iudicello, Kathleen 130
Jacobsen, Cheryl Rose 193
Jaisle, Allen 175
Jenkins, Norman 309
Jensen, Victoria 172
Johnson, Jerry J. 164
Jones, Deb 353
Kahn, Susan 29
Karim, Amin 167
Kasvinsky, Peter J. 227
Keeley, Edward J. 167
Keeling, J. Keith 89
Keogh, Andy 66
Kerr, Robert R. 126
Klassen, Peter 217
Klein, Elaine M. 365, 381
Knedler, Michael L. 333
Knox, Cheryl 146
Knuesel, Rita 146
Kolakowsky, Nancy C. 335
Kontogianes, John T. 304
Ladwig, Dennis 35
Larson, Daniel P. 329
Larson, Gayle 164
Larson, James 149
Larson, Lisa 164
Leskes, Andrea 10
Lind, Don 183
Link, Harvey 44
Loomis, Trish 321
Luft, Kay 377
Maddin, Carol A. 335
Mahony, Mary 118
Mann, Karen B. 209
Marre, Katy E. 227
Martin, Vicki J. 80
Mayers, Patrick L. 167
McMillan, Douglas N. 300, 395
McNeilly, Diane 309
Mendelowitz, Seth 202
Messenger, Christian 29
Mittler, Mary L. 212
Mulhern, Jean K. 384
Myers, Keith 223
Neff, Jerry L. 48
Newton, Beth 242
Oberman, Bonnie 262
Ostheimer, John M. 94
Pesta, Lawrence 130
Peterson, Ann 368
Peterson, Marvin W. 15
Pfalzer, Lucinda 257
Phillips, Dorothy 377
Phillips, John R. 126
Pinahs-Schultz, Pamela 196
Ponzar, Loretta 321
Rasch, Lee 35
Reed, Ronald D. 108, 313
Reid, Robert L. 356
Roark, Denis 52
Roldan Ida 262
Rowe, Stephen D. 392
Roweton, William E. 189
Scarafiotti, Carol 206
Schendel, Nancy 353
Schultz, Marilyn F. 289
Selig, Suzanne 257
Selsor, Mindy 321
Sertich, Joseph 85
Shakiban, Cheri 180
Shepard, Kersten 276
Shepherd, Deneen 123
Shultz, Judith J. 325
Singer, Ron 94
Smith, Dwight 186
Smith, Mark 135
Snider, Kevin J. G. 289, 356
Stacy, Cheryl 232
Statzell, Donna S. 325
Sterling, Jo Ann 371
Sullivan, Eugene 25
Suzzane, Deb 149
Swanson, Ronald A. 48
Tambrino, Paul A. 3
Thiede, Cindi 223
Throne, Robin 276
Vensel, William A. 66
Watson, Russell 217
Weiner, Charles S. 300, 395
Wells, Richard H. 289
Wenzel, Alan 172
Wiesenfarth, Joseph 381
Williams, Miriam Q. 180
Williams, Pearl 130
Wright, David 135
Yackey, Britt 159
Yevin, Bernie 242
Young, Candace C. 103
Patricia L. Ziegler 341

Cross-Reference to Meeting Sessions

General Program

Session Number	Paper Title and Authors	page number
102	A Core Values Process: Giving Life to the Mission. Gary J. Boelhower, Marian College of Fond du Lac	76
103	Assessing the Achievement of General Education Objectives: A College-Wide Approach. Trudy Bers, B. Diane Davis, and Mary L. Mittler, Oakton Community College	212
104	The Influences of Regional Accreditation Associations on Institutions' Approaches to, Support for, and Use of Student Assessment. Marvin W. Peterson and Catherine Augustine, University of Michigan	15
105	Toward More Self-Reflective Teaching: A Model for Integrating the Use of Classroom Assessment, Peer Observation and Review, Rubrics, and a Course Portfolio as Discipline-Based Faculty Development. Karla Brown, Hawkeye Community College.	238
107	Ethics for Institutions, Faculty, and Students in a Technology Enhanced Environment. Carole Beere and Gwen Hillesheim, Walden University	266
108	The Quest for Quality: Using the Self-Study Process to Connect Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. Charles S. Weiner and Douglas N. McMillan, Southeastern Oklahoma State University	300
109	Do We Get Them? Do We Keep Them? Do They Learn? Applying Quality Principles to Higher Education. Jane Bishop and Dennis Ladwig, Lakeshore Technical College; Jerrilyn Brewer and Lee Rasch, Western Wisconsin Technical College	35
110	General Education Reform and the Continuous Pursuit of Quality Learning. John A. Halpin, Eureka College	71
112	Assessment as a Method to Improve General Education. Karen B. Mann and Judith Dallinger, Western Illinois University	209
114	The At-Risk Student in the Freshman Year: An Assessment-Based Approach to Organizational Design. John R. Phillips, Springfield College, and Robert R. Kerr, Illinois Community College Board	126
115	Keeping Competitive with Business and Industry Training While Applying Performance Outcomes and Measuring for Efficiency and Effectiveness. Mary Ann Bazile, Keith Myers, and Cindi Thiede, Moraine Park Technical College	223
116	Developing an Institutional Statement of Ethics. Janice Elias and Denise Da Ros, Youngstown State University	251
118	Articulation of the Baldrige Criteria to Meet the Self-Study Guidelines for NCA. Denis Roark, Eastern New Mexico University	52
119	Collaborative Strategic Planning and Institutional Change. Ronald M. Singer, John M. Ostheimer, Esther Letven, and Art Dudycha, University of Wisconsin-Parkside	94
120	The Reality of Assessing General Education Competencies of Part-Time Community College Students. Carol Scarafiotti, Laura Helminski, and Larry Celaya, Maricopa County Community College–Rio Salado College	206
121	Implementing Performance Assessment in the Major. Miriam Q. Williams and Cheri Shakiban, University of St. Thomas	180
122	Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning: The Evolving Role of Assessment at a Research University. Mary E. Huba, Iowa State University	114
123	The Centrality of the Associate Degree at Community Colleges. Paul A. Tambrino, Iowa Valley Community College District, and David A. Berry, Essex County College	3
124	Managing Adjunct Faculty: A Model for Classroom Success. Beth Newton and Bernie Yevin, Fontbonne College	242

131 When Quality Meets Assessment: The Good, the Better, and the Ugly. Gloria Dohman, Harvey Link, and Gary Henrickson, North Dakota State College of Science ... 44

132 Mission Restatement via Heritage Rediscovery: A Case Study. James D. Evans, Lindenwood University ... 59

134 Using Statistics and a User-Friendly Workbook to Engage Faculty in the General Education Process across the Curriculum. Russell Watson, Janis Geesaman, and Peter Klassen, College of DuPage ... 217

135 Best Practices for Faculty Research/Scholarship Development in the Master's Comprehensive/Doctoral Environment. Peter J. Kasvinsky, Youngstown State University, and Katy E. Marre, University of Dayton ... 227

136 Criterion Five as an Organizing Framework. Suzanne Selig and Lucinda Pfalzer, University of Michigan-Flint ... 257

137 The Quest for Quality: Implementing and Documenting a Distance Education Partnership. Linda L. Byington, Davenport College of Business, and Jennifer Byron, DES, Inc. ... 280

138 The Three E's–Evolution, Empowerment, and Excitement: Results of the Commission's Self-Study Process at Tulsa Community College. John T. Kontogianes and Cheryl Hughes, Tulsa Community College ... 304

141 Institutional Mission and Strategic Plan: Map and Territory. William A. Vensel and Andy Keogh, Ohio Dominican College ... 66

143 Assessment Measures Leading to More Effective Assessment Programs. Debra K. Cartwright and Candace C. Young, Truman State College ... 103

144 Creating a Sophomore Capstone Experience in the Community College. Victoria Jensen and Alan Wenzel, Highland Community College ... 172

145 Greater Expectations for Liberal Education in the Twenty-First Century: Aims, Design, and Quality. Andrea Leskes, Association of American Colleges and Universities ... 10

149 The Evolution of Strategic Planning at a Two-Year Technical College: Changing the Culture of a Centralized Bureaucracy. Vicki J. Martin and John R. Birkholz, Milwaukee Area Technical College ... 80

150 Maintaining Momentum in the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement. Linda Allen, Kirkwood Community College ... 141

151 Transforming the Campus Culture: From Faculty Resistance to Faculty Leading the Charge! Cheryl Knox, St. John's University, and Rita Knuesel, College of St. Benedict ... 146

152 Assessment and Program Review: Linking Two Processes. Dwight Smith and Douglas Eder, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville ... 186

153 Assessing General Education Programs by Integrating Theory, Process, and Practice. Pamela Pinhas-Schultz, Carroll College ... 196

154 The Urban Universities Portfolio Project (UUPP): Linking Learning, Improvement, and Accountability. Susan Kahn and Sharon Hamilton, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis; Christian Messenger, University of Illinois at Chicago ... 29

155 Assessing Non-Traditional Adult Degree Programs: The Framework, the Instruments, the Results. David Wright and Mark Smith, Indiana Wesleyan University ... 135

156 Distance Education Through Strategic Alliances. Scott Herriott, Maharishi University of Management ... 271

159 Incorporating the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Criteria into Your NCA Accreditation Process. Ronald A. Swanson and Helene Hedlund, Northwest Technical College; Jerry L. Neff, AES International ... 48

160 Getting More Out of the Self-Study: Using Self-Study Outcomes to Aid in Strategic Planning. Timothy V. Franklin, Kevin J. G. Snider, Marilyn F. Schultz, and Richard H. Wells, Indiana State University ... 289

161 The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Overcoming Obstacles to Assessment. Richard Baker, John Cosgrove, and Deneen Shepherd, St. Louis Community College ... 123

162 Assessing the "Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart, and Imagination." Allen Jaisle and Bruce Francis, Capella University ... 175

163 A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Student Assessment. Ronald D. Reed and Rolf C. Enger, U.S. Air Force Academy ... 108

164 Interdisciplinary General Education: Refining General Education Criteria. Cheryl Rose Jacobsen, Wartburg College, and Joan B. Fiscella, University of Illinois at Chicago ... 193

165 Revitalizing Institutional Assessments with Alternative Program Evaluation Designs. William E. Roweton, Chadron State College ... 189

169 Process is Key to Plan's Power. Joseph Sertich and Anne Marie Erickson, Itasca Community College; Steve Frantz, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities ... 85

170 Using Electronic Portfolios to Assess Technical and General Education Outcomes. Lisa Larson, Jerry J. Johnson, Beverly Claybrook, and Gayle Larson, Dakota County Technical College ... 164

171 Striving for Excellence: A Small College Experiments with Assessment to Improve Student Learning and Strengthen the Curriculum. Diana Brigham Beaudoin and Linda Marie Bos, Mount Mary College ... 152

172 New Directions in Assessment: Leveraging Technology in the Quest for Quality. Susan Rickey Hatfield, Winona State University, and Britt Yackey, Furkon, Inc. ... 159

173 Defining Good Practice in Adult Degree Programs. Patricia Brewer, Sinclair Community College, and Eugene Sullivan, American Council on Education ... 25

174 Teaching Reconnections: Assessment-Driven Institutional Renewal. Ronald Dowe and Mary Mahony, Wayne County Community College District ... 118

175 A Collaborative Problem-Based Model for Distance Education: A Master of Arts in Teaching Program that Supports Peer Collaboration Among Teachers. Hattie Gilmore and Larry Gregg, Saint Mary College; Karen Evans, SkyLight Professional Development ... 284

177 From Candidacy to Accreditation. Vickie Donnell and R. Elaine Crabtree, Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences ... 416

179 Moving the Cemetery: A Case Study in Curriculum and Institutional Renewal. J. Keith Keeling, Central Methodist College ... 89

180 Enhancing Faculty and Staff's Ability to Make Quantitative Decisions: Exploding the Usefulness of Assessment Data. Don Lind, Coffeyville Community College ... 183

181 Improving Program Quality through Student Outcomes Assessment in the Capstone Course. Edward J. Keeley, Amin Karim, and Patrick L. Mayers, DeVry Institute of Technology ... 167

182 Struggles that Staff and Faculty Encountered in Their Implementation of Assessments of Learning and Satisfaction at a Doctoral Degree Granting Institution. Deb Suzzane, Rogers State University, and James Larson, University of North Dakota ... 149

183 General Education Assessment: Keeping the Process Practical, Manageable, and Beneficial. Seth Mendelowitz, Parkland College ... 202

184 The Adult Learning Focused Institution. Thomas Flint and Ruth Frey, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning ... 22

185 Diversifying Assessment, Re-Examining Learners Assessed: An Important Look at Developmental Education Kathleen Iudicello, Pearl Williams, and Lawrence Pesta, Maricopa County Community College–Estrella Mountain Community College ... 130

186 Online Higher Education Trains Knowledge Workers for the 21st Century. Robin Throne and Kersten Shepard, Hamilton College ... 276

187 If We Had Known Then What We Know Now... A Retrospective on Candidacy by a Small Career College. Sarah M. Dennison and Tawnie L. Cortez, Rasmussen College ... 405

192 Significant Planning/Significant Results. James P. Colman, Cedarville College ... 98

194 Preparing High Quality Faculty for Learning Focused Institutions in the 21st Century. Howard G. Sam Bass, Nicolet Area Technical College, and Kenneth Collins, Northeastern State University ... 244

195 The Changing Roles of Faculty: The Role of Adjunct in Adult Degree Programs. Cheryl Stacy, Bluffton College ... 232

196	Plan Implementation by Continuous and Very Public Performance Evaluation. William Cheek and James Baker, Southwest Missouri State University	295
197	Achieving Diversity: A Process. Bonnie Oberman and Ida Roldan, Institute for Clinical Social Work	262

Pre-Conference Workshop on Self-Study

Session Number	Paper Title and Authors	page number
WSS*	Are You Ready for the Next Step? Rebecca J. Burgart and Michael L. Knedler, Iowa Western Community College	333
WSS	But How Do We Reach Them All? Elaine M. Klein and Joseph Wiesenfarth, University of Wisconsin-Madison	381
WSS	The Chicken Little Syndrome: Demystifying the Self-Study Process. Ann Frankland, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma	317
WSS	Conducting a Self-Study and Team Visit on a Dime: How Small Colleges Can Achieve a Quality Self-Study and Team Visit with Limited Human and Financial Resources. Kay Luft and Dorothy Phillips, St. Luke's College	377
WSS	Connecting the NCA Team to Distant Students Through Technology. Jo Ann Sterling, University of St. Francis	371
WSS	Countdown: "On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!" Beth J. Bridgforth and Jan C. Haven, East Arkansas Community College	374
WSS	Developing Data Resources for Facilitating Institutional Self-Study. Charles F. Harrington and Robert L. Reid, University of Southern Indiana; and Kevin J. G. Snider, Indiana State University	356
WSS	The End Really in Sight: Final Preparations for the Team Visit. Daniel P. Larson, St. Charles County Community College, and Mimi Elwell, Lake Michigan College	329
WSS	Evaluation Versus Description: Conducting the Self-Study and Writing a Good Report. Stephen D. Rowe, Concord College, and Kay L. Clawson, West Liberty State College	392
WSS	Facing (and Listening to) the Music: Effective Use of the Third Party Comment Process. Jean K. Mulhern, Wilberforce University	384
WSS	Fostering Employee Ownership in the Self-Study Process through Committee Empowerment. Deb Jones and Nancy Schendel, Iowa Lakes Community College	353
WSS	Getting Started. Diane McNeilly and Norman Jenkins, Kishwaukee College	309
WSS	If We Knew Then What We Know Now. Nancy C. Kolakowsky and Carol A. Maddin, Northland Pioneer College	335
WSS	Initial Affiliation…Candidate Style. Vickie Donnell and R. Elaine Crabtree, Lester L. Cox College of Nursing and Health Sciences	411
WSS	Linear vs. Systemic Perspectives: The Processes and Outcomes of a Focused Visit One Year Later. Charles S. Weiner and Douglas N. McMillan, Southeastern Oklahoma State University	395
WSS	Organizing a Professional-Looking Resource Room. Ann Peterson and Gale Bigbee, South Central Technical College	368
WSS	Practical Advice and Useful Survey Tools to Expedite the Collection of Data and Writing the Self-Study Report and to Set the Stage for Ongoing Improvement: A Private Liberal Arts College Shares Its Knowledge and Experience. Marguerite M. Bennett, Mount Vernon Nazarene College	388
WSS	The Resource Room: Real, Virtual, and Imagined Elaine M. Klein, University of Wisconsin-Madison	365

---

* Workshop on Self-Study

WSS Strategies for Surviving the Self-Study Process. Trish Loomis, Loretta Ponzar, and Mindy Selsor, Jefferson College 321

WSS Team Building: Key to a Successful Self-Study and Team Visit. Ronald D. Reed and Rolf C. Enger, U.S. Air Force Academy 313

WSS Transitioning from NCA's Traditional Model to the New AQIP Model: One Institution's Process. Laura D. Browne, Iowa Valley Community College District, and Cindy Green, Marshalltown Community College 349

WSS Tricks, Treats, and Traps. Judith J. Shultz and Donna S. Statzell, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College 325

WSS Using Faculty Liaisons and Poster Sessions to Increase Campus Involvement in Self-Study and Student Assessment Activities. Edward Angus, Fort Lewis College 399

WSS Using the Institutional Plan for Self-Study to Accomplish a Purposeful, Meaningful, and Successful Self-Study Process. Patricia L. Ziegler, American Institute of Business 341

WSS Worksheets: A Tool for Multiple Self-Study Tasks. James Clarke and Anne Marie Erickson, Itasca Community College 361

COLLECTION OF PAPERS ON SELF-STUDY AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

30 NORTH LASALLE STREET, SUITE 2400 • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602-2504

2000 EDITION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NCA

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").